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Graduation ceremony sends off Class of 2024

By Michael Reo

On June 2, Ratcliffe Field was filled with families, friends and a flurry of caps and gowns. Around 100 degrees were set to be conferred that afternoon, and as the stands filled up, the graduates took their seats on the field.

The ceremony saw a number of speakers from South Haven High School, from the class's own Hawk Li to principal Ryan Williamson. In an interview, Williamson said although he didn't want to detract from previous years, the Class of 2024 included a lot of star students.

"I don't want to take away from previous years, too, but there's no doubt that we had some exceptional students this year, and their accomplishments are impressive," Williamson said.

Williamson found the uniqueness of the class in their abnormal start to their high school careers, impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

"Their first year of high school was a blended learning, so it was a part online. We were coming in person two days a week, so it was a rough start to their freshman year, so they had a lot of perseverance," Williamson said.

Williamson highlighted that persistence when addressing the class at the ceremony.

"Graduation from South Haven High School is a culmination of your persistent efforts. In order to accomplish this, you had to make changes in your perspective, your attitude, your priorities and your actions," Williamson said. "Life will continue to present you with challenges and opportunities. Apply the values you've learned: responsibility, caring, trustworthy, helpful, and awareness."

Alongside Williamson, school board president Laura Bos spoke. Bos, who had a son graduating with the Class of 2024, said the graduation season reminded her of songs from videos put together in her son's younger years. Bos listed off some of these songs, including Rascal Flatts' "My Wish," while talking about her pride toward the class.

"Today is filled with your family, friends and teachers, all of whom are here because we are so proud of you and your achievements. Our collective wish for you is to have a life filled with dreams," Bos said.

Kayley Gorham, one of the top students in the graduating class, also gave a speech. She addressed the opportunities that lay before students as they leave high school and decide what to do next.

"After you get your diploma, your life is in front of you," Gorham said. "You'll have so many decisions to make, and patience is key. Be determined to not give up."

Following the speeches and performances by the high school choir, Williamson instructed students to turn their tassels, signaling their completed graduation from the high school. As the ceremony concluded, caps flew through the air, and the Class of 2024 put their previous education behind them.

South Haven top graduates look to the future

By Michael Reo

With their time in school behind them, the top students in South Haven High School's graduating class are excited for the new opportunities their futures will bring.

Topping the class this year were Kayley Gorham and Kelsey Hodgman, who stood among 10 other graduates with grade point averages over 4.0. These students joined a larger group of 26 top honor graduates with GPAs over 3.75.

Gorham and Hodgman have a longstanding interest in science, and their future studies reflect that. Gorham will be going on to study biochemistry at the University of Michigan, while Hodgman will be studying chemistry at Butler University.

Both students previously competed together in Science Olympiad, a STEM-based tournament between schools across Michigan. Gorham and Hodgman took first in their forensics competition this year, being the only pair from South Haven to make it to the state competition.

Gorham said placing at the tournament, considering what she wants to do in her future, was very exciting.

"I remember at the award ceremony … [Hodgman] had to leave, so I was the only one there from that event, and they kept skipping over our event, so I was on the edge of my seat, waiting for them to call our event. They finally call our event, and I call her, and I'm like, 'Kelsey, we got first,' and she was screaming on the phone, telling her mom," Gorham said. "It's definitely something I won't forget."

Both graduates said they would miss their activities when going away to college. Hodgman — once a tennis player, record-holding bowler and member of the orchestra at the school — said it would be the only bittersweet part of leaving high school behind.

Although the high school does not celebrate valedictorian and salutatorian honors, Hodgman and Gorham still left their awards night May 31 with a fair amount of accomplishments. Among their awards and nominations, there were a couple that the pair were particularly proud of.

The Southwestern Athletic Conference bestowed Gorham with a scholar-athlete award, which she was proud of for recognizing her commitment to athletics and academics.

Hodgman received the Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen award and the Critic Cup award, which she appreciated because of the thoughtfulness of those that considered her.

"Those are voted on by staff at the school, so it's really special that they thought of me as someone to look up to," Hodgman said.

After the ceremony, Gorham and Hodgman agreed that they were ready to move on to the next chapters of their lives. Gorham pointed out the change of pace that going to the University of Michigan would bring.

"I've lived in the middle of two cornfields my whole life, so I'm really excited to live city life," Gorham said. "It's gonna be a big change, but … I feel like it's a change I need right now."

Hodgman said she was excited "to meet new people and expand my knowledge" at Butler.

Gorham said there was a lot to look forward to, and while leaving high school was bittersweet, it was "part of life."

"I'm just looking forward to starting over and trying new things, meeting new people and learning what I'm actually excited to learn about," Gorham said. "I'm just really excited for that new experience and that new path of life."

Kayley Gorham

Kelsey Hodgman

City Council furthers zoning ordinance, establishes moratorium

By Michael Reo

At the first South Haven City Council meeting of June, the council handled a number of matters, new and old. They furthered the zoning ordinance regarding short-term rentals, pushing it along to the city's Planning Commission, in addition to adopting a moratorium on personal STRs, recognizing the awards gifted by the South Haven Area Community Foundation and bringing in LGBTQ+ Pride Month in South Haven with a proclamation.

Following their pursuance of a moratorium on personal STRs in the previous meeting — which would halt new personal STRs being accepted for the next six months — the city attorney drafted the moratorium. In the meeting June 3, the council voted to adopt that moratorium.

In the next six months, during the duration of the moratorium, the council resolved to investigate the preexisting personal STRs. Council member Mary Hosley clarified, however, that the moratorium could be ended early under certain conditions.

"Although this is set for a six-month moratorium, if the zoning ordinance is completed to address the issue for which this is helping us identify," Hosley said, "this could be vacated, rescinded at an earlier point in time."

The zoning ordinance in question, which was sent back to the city attorney to be edited at the previous meeting, was also furthered at the meeting.

Although the council had a handful of changes to make to the ordinance, they voted unanimously to send the ordinance to the Planning Commission, where it could then be finalized and sent back to the council to consider implementation.

While members of the public and council members had previously levied concern that the ordinance would be "grandparenting" preexisting STRs that had previously not adhered to the new ordinance's rules, city attorney Cliff Bloom stated that the ordinance itself would not be grandparenting these properties.

"This language is not grandparenting anything beyond what the Constitution requires, so just like any other violation of the zoning ordinance, if staff finds a violation, and they pursue it, that's one way of doing it," Bloom said.

In the event that the ordinance is adopted, all STRs "legally in existence" would be allowed under the ordinance. Because of Michigan law regarding "lawful nonconforming uses," any STRs that were established under the previous ordinance would not be subject to the rules of the new ordinance. If a violation of the previous ordinance was found in a complaint from an "aggrieved neighbor," either by city staff or the Zoning Board of Appeals, action could be taken to pursue disqualifying said STR.

Following discussion, the council sent the draft of the zoning ordinance to the commission under the stipulation that certain wording be changed and other wording be discussed by the commission in the future.

In addition to the work on STRs, the council heard from the community foundation, who recently awarded grants to a number of local and regional nonprofits. Many nonprofits were present to thank the council and show the work being done. Afterward, the council resolved to consider June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month with a proclamation of allyship. Many members of the LGBTQIA+ community and allies showed up to support the resolution.

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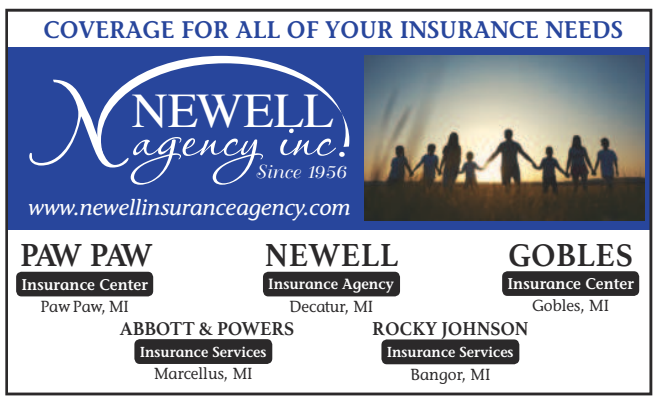

Commissioners to replace large court document filing system

By Paul Garrod
Staff Writer

PAW PAW – At the May 28, Van Buren County Board of Commissioners meeting, commissioners approved a request for the disposal of a large court document filing system located in the Van Buren County Courthouse annex basement.

According to commissioners, it is obsolete due to the county's digitization project. Commissioners said with the implementation of the digitization project, the filing system is of no further use. The board said the sale of the large court document system could be achieved through Biddergy. With the newly created space, commissioners said it would create new offices for State Probation and Parole, allowing them to move out of the courthouse basement and consolidate their operations in one place. In turn, their vacated space in the courthouse basement would allow Specialty Courts to improve their working environment.

Also, during the meeting, commissioners approved a request for out-of-state travel for a member of the Circuit Courts team to attend a training/conference in Indianapolis, IN, from June 28 to July 1.

The Van Buren County Treatment Courts received federal grants from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). Funding for continued education was allocated in the approved budget. The Swift & Sure Program has two conferences a year. Funding for this training, which includes mileage reimbursement, lodging, conference registration and meals, is covered by the BJA grant. No county contribution was requested.

Commissioners approved a request on behalf of Circuit Court for the submission and acceptance of renewing the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Community Corrections Grant. The Van Buren County Office of Community Corrections Advisory Board met and approved the FY 2025 Office of Community Corrections (OCC) Grant on April 11. The OCC requested a total of $186,183 to provide pre-trial supervision, electronic monitoring, drug testing, and treatment services.

Commissioners approved the 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan, as well as a mileage reimbursement policy.

The county does not currently have a mileage reimbursement policy for everyday business travel. Commissioners said mileage reimbursement policies play a crucial role in modern business operations by providing a structured framework for compensation of employees for the use of their personal vehicles for work-related purposes, Commissioners further stated that in establishing the policy, it will serve many objectives. It provides

fair compensation to employees for the use of their personal vehicles, promotes transparency and accountability for both the employer and for the

county, encourages efficient resource management, and complies with relevant regulations and guidelines.

Commissioners approved a contract renewal for the Daily Recovery Zone for $20,160. The funding would cover the costs for rent, utilities, and communications.

The Daily Recovery Zone serves the Van Buren County community by providing services for those in need of support with substance abuse disorders by providing not only peer support meetings, but also community service opportunities, GED tutoring, job search and application assistance, and family orientated events. Daily Recovery Zone has a building in Paw Paw and recently expanded its space to allow for additional classes and groups.

A contract for providing funds to the Recovery Zone was approved last year (FY 22 - 23) for $25,160. This included a one-time amount of $5,000 for facility needs. Because of turnover in the county administration and finance department, the contract renewal was missed and consequently the funds were not budgeted. In addition, the contract and resolution were not clear that the intent was to make this a disbursement without an annual authorization. In approving the contract renewal, commissioners cleared up any confusion.

Commissioners said typically, they do not enter arrangements like this without a termination date and a request for funds needs to occur each year during the budget process. It is a process used for entities such as the Domestic Violence Coalition, Van Buren Conservation District, and others.

Commissioners clarified the contract language, stating that it is a one-year contract, expiring Sept. 30, 2024.

Commissioners approved a request to rebrand the GIS Department into the Digital Information Department and approved the reclassification of the land management specialist position to the digital information specialist.

Commissioners also approved a request to update the workers' compensation policy.

Commissioners said the Human Resources Department has received late reports of work-related injuries within county government. Commissioners further stated prompt reporting of such incidents is critical not only for the well-being of county employees but also for facilitating timely reporting to the county worker's compensation carrier.

Commissioners said that to emphasize the importance of timely incident reporting, "Failure to report such incidents promptly may result in disciplinary action," was added to the wording.

Commissioners approved the appointments of Chris Tapper, Michael Saenz and Clare Olney to positions on the Van Buren County Mental Health Board (VBCMHB).

Tapper is currently the village manager of Decatur. He has 17 years of experience as a village manager/assistant village manager and village clerk. He is completing his bachelor's degree in public administration at Grand Valley State University. He is a member of several associations focused on municipal management. He previously served on the VBCMH Board from 2013-2017.

Saenz is currently a senior nuclear electrical planner with the Cook Nuclear plant. He has extensive volunteer service including with the South Haven Center for the Arts, Box Factory for the Arts, AYSO soccer and Habitat for Humanity. He is a South Haven Robotics Team mentor, a member of St. Basil Knights of Columbus. He holds an associate science in Applied Science and Technology from Thomas Edison State College.

Olney is a retired social worker having worked for Van Buren County Department of Human Services from 1978-2010. She also worked for a decade at Bronson Hospital (South Haven) as a medical social worker/discharge planner. Olney occasionally substitutes teaches at Maple Grove Elementary School in South Haven, and she serves as a board member for Senior Services of Van Buren County. She is a member of the Lead Team and Outreach Ministries at First United Methodist Church of South Haven. She holds a master's degree in social work from Grand Valley State University.

Tapper's term will expire March 31, 2025, Saenz's term will expire March 31, 2026, and Olney's term will expire March 31, 2027.

Commissioners approved an interlocal agreement and the contract for materials management planning between Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties to establish a multi-county materials management plan, a materials management planning committee and designated the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission as the designated planning agency for plan administration.

At the commissioners' May 14 meeting, commissioners approved the appointments of Karla Tankut and Judge Susan Metzger to the Community Corrections Advisory Board (CCAB).

Due to the transitions of retired Judge David DiStefano and Allegan County Public Defender Chad Catalino, the CCAB recommended Tankut and Judge Metzger to fill the vacancies. Tankut is the Van Buren County Director of the Office of the Public Defender, and Judge Metzger was appointed to the bench in March 2024 and is currently serving as the probate judge. She has many years of experience working with Van Buren County as a defense attorney, serving on the Juvenile, FOC and Specialty Court roster.

Commissioners approved a request from Warner Vineyards to use county property for the Warner Vineyards Summer Concert Series overflow parking.

Patrick Warner of Warner Vineyards, Inc. requested use of the three paved, non-sheriff, parking lots in Paw Paw for overflow parking during their summer concert series. The use would be 6 to 11 p.m., Friday and Saturday, May through September. Commissioners said the concert series generates substantial economic benefits for the local businesses as people come to the concerts and visit stores, restaurants, etc.

With the establishment of a Van Buren County Parks and Recreation Commission in August 2022. Commissioners moved forward with the next essential phase in developing county park and recreation amenities which require funding. Act 90 of 1913 facilitates county commissions to fund parks and recreation through an ad valorem property tax, which must not exceed one-quarter of one mill unless approved by county voters.

At the Oct. 10, 2023, meeting of the Van Buren County Parks and Recreation Commission, a motion was unanimously passed to recommend that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners adopt a .10 mill (1/10) tax levy, anticipated to generate approximately $400,000 annually for parks and recreation. The determination of whether to apply this levy to summer or winter tax bills remains undecided, with a preference expressed for the winter billing for cost efficiency and simplicity for local units. The millage will generate approximately $400,000 for county parks and recreation.

Commissioners approved the timing to levy a county-wide parks and recreation millage and passed a resolution to implement the millage.

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2ND FRONT PAGE

Queens and kings visit State Capitol

On Tuesday, May 7, Senate Republican Leader Aric Nesbitt was joined by Senator Jonathan Lindsey and Representatives Pauline Wendzel and Brad Paquette to welcome the 2024 Blossomtime Pageant Court at the Capitol in Lansing. The queens and kings of the court were officially introduced during both the House and Senate sessions, as well as meeting with the legislators on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Local women nominated to state faith-based organization

Lorriane Root, left, and Robyn Wilson Peake, right, were both nominated to the 2024 She Leads Michigan, SLM. It marks the second time for Wilson Peake to be nominated to the faith-based organization. SLM provides a safe platform for the exchange of ideas with a community of faith-focused, independent thinkers who support and encourage each other, networked together through trusted relationships in Christ. SLM gives women a voice through weekly "She Speaks" broadcasts exploring tough topics that impact every level of society as well as occasional public and private gatherings. Members come together for encouragement through prayer, practical support, and friendship.

Courtesy photo

Special Olympians bring home medals from 2024 Summer Games

Special Olympians brought home the medals from the recently held 2024 Summer Games The medal total from the 71 athletes from Area 17 (Van Buren, Berrien and Cass counties included: Gold - 55, Silver - 26, Bronze - 26, Fourth Place - 25, Fifth Place - 11, and Sixth Place – 9. The Knights of Columbus expressed their congratulations to the 71 athletes for their success at the 2024 Summer Games. Knight of Columbus member Phil Hover, said, "We want to thank the members from the Paw Paw police and fire departments, Michigan State police, Van Buren and Berrien Sheriff's departments for helping us make this a special day for the athletes. Also, thanks go to Family Fare for their donation to the lunch." Michigan Special Olympics is celebrating its 50th year this year, "and has only been successful because of the dedication of the coaches and volunteers and the parents who include their children in the program, and the public who support this great organization. We are truly blessed to have these amazing young women and men in our communities," said Hover.

Courier-Leader photos/Paul Garrod

AREA NEWS BRIEFS

South Haven Police Chief to retire

SOUTH HAVEN – The South Haven Police Chief recently announced that she will be retiring early next year.

South Haven Police Chief Natalie Thompson said her retirement date will be Feb. 25, ending a 32-year career in law enforcement. She said she is stepping down to spend more time with family and friends.City officials expressed appreciation to Chief Thompson for her many decades of service to the South Haven community. The city plans to work with the Michigan Municipal League's executive search team to fill Thompson's position.

Second annual "Play with Your Food Festival" to return to Paw Paw

PAW PAW - The Village Players are planning its Second Annual Play with Your Food Festival in September. The play will be held at La Cantina restaurant, 139 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, in the restaurant's lower level, according to Paw Paw Village Players President Don Stine. He said the exact date(s) have yet to be determined, however, he wanted to give a heads-up "so you can get as excited about it as we are." Stine said scripts have not been chosen yet, "but as soon as they are, a casting call will be sent out for auditions." For further information, questions or suggestions, contact Stine by e-mail at: villageplayers@ppv

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School students talk about their recent participation in national competition

Trinity Lutheran School students recently talked about their participation in the 2024 KidWind Challenge held recently in Minnesota.

Charlotte said of the 2024 World KidWind Challenge, "When doing a simple thing, math, it's always the way to go, for example, one of the instinct challenges we worked with a college student and he tried to use math for a floating windmill in a small tub, which you think that it would work better when precise, although that would work better. We had limited time and materials; it was very fun, but our windmill fell over during the test.

Jasper said of his trip, "I liked that it is a fun experience and that we can build turbines which I love to build things."

Coach Jennifer Phifer said of the trip, "It was great to meet with last year's national championship team to get pointers on how to adjust our windmill. We learned how to make a tail fin for the yawl competition. The judges turned our windmill blades 90-degrees to the wind and we were tested on our ability to pivot into the wind."

She added, "The national weather service is experimenting with drones to send up once each hour. They can get more timely data compared to only being able to send up a weather balloon twice each day. There were big energy companies at the convention going on. There were five companies developing software to build models on the feasibility of where to build wind or solar farms. This was great information to see how much research goes into deciding where to put the best locations. Students were able to modify their designs after testing each time. They could barter to trade for parts. We met teams from all over the world; we saw electrical engineers working mechanical engineers to get maximum efficiency out of them. We were able to watch the high school teams test in the high-speed wind tunnels. Some of them literally exploded and blew apart from the high-speed rotations."

She concluded, "The solar projects were super cool; a desalination project to remove salt from ocean water. They were using solar panels to supply the energy to remove the salt."

Evan said of his experience, "I learned a lot about wind turbines and how they work and generate power and I also liked the difference in teams with all the states and counties. (such as) I learned that having a bigger motor was very helpful due to it making way more power than a smaller one."

He added, "There was another conference going on at the convention center in conjunction with our competition. I got to meet with the CEO of one of the biggest windmill companies in the world. They build the windmills, install them, and run the power lines from them. It was neat to meet with the CEO of an alternative power company."

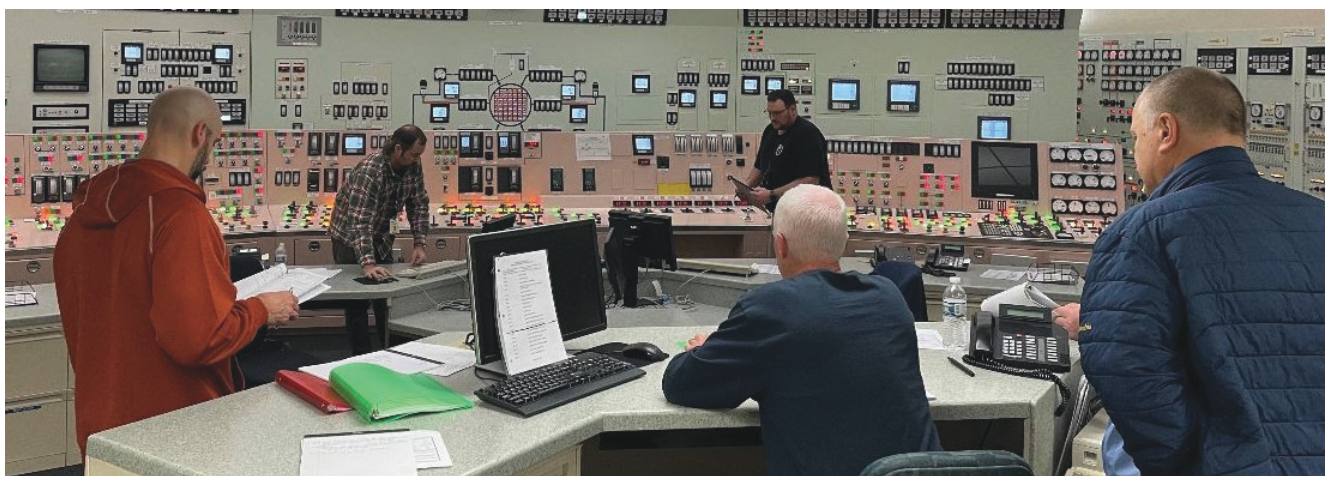
Isadora, who provided team support, and is a sibling of two team members, said, "This was a very interesting experience. And I learned that there is such a thing as a portable disposable waste bag for the people that work on the wind turbines during maintenance (poop bag). I talked with a high school team from Colorado who had an interesting blade; it was orange and circular. They got the idea from a ho-coter. It had three separate blades like you would see on a helicopter, or like the four-blades you would see on a drone. Another middle school team from Mexico created a blade that was in a spiral shape. Some solar fields plant different types of plants to find ways to find multi-use for the land. We were able to sample honey from a field that was in a solar field, they call it "solar honey."

Cecilia, who provided team support, and is the sibling of two team members, said, "I talked to 18 engineers while the other kids were doing their project. One of the engineers told me that I should be a structural engineer when I grow up. I love to build and draw and those are the important things of being an engineer, because if you didn't know how to draw or build, you wouldn't know what to do."

Parent chaperone Dani Foll added about the experience, "It was amazing all the events they got to do. We were tired, but it was worth it."

Trinity Lutheran School Principal Bill Semrau said of the students' international competition, "I am so proud of our students to represent the State of Michigan at this international competition. They have worked hard throughout the year researching windmills, alternative energy, and designing blades. Our coach and STEM teacher has dedicated many weekends and after school hours to supporting the team and providing this great opportunity for our students. We are blessed to have the financial support from our church, members, families, and the Paw Paw community to make this experience possible for our students. Listening to the staff, chaperones, and especially the students after their return, I am grateful for all the connections they have made with companies, collegiate teams, and students from across the globe. Together, they will be accomplishing great things in the future."

Holtec announces "remarkable progress" toward repowering Palisades



Holtec recently announced that "remarkable progress" has been made in the early stages of its journey toward repowering the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant in Covert Township. Those accomplishments include re-establishment of critical plant workforce, revitalized training programs, procurement of numerous plant systems and components, significant regulatory developments to chart the path forward, and continuing firming up of funding streams – all of which portend a timely re-powering of the plant.

"Our workforce augmentation efforts have met with great success, with more than 360 Holtec associates now employed at the plant, an increase of nearly 150 personnel since the re-start program began. This recruitment initiative has led to the on-boarding of new talent as well as the return of former plant employees, contributing to the preservation and creation of hundreds of high-paying jobs in Michigan. Notably, nearly half of these employees are union members, representing the United Workers Union of America (UWUA) and the United Government Security Officers of America (UGSOA). Holtec has successfully executed a recommissioning labor agreement with 15 trade unions that are supporting the project, reinforcing our commitment to collaboration with unionized labor, fair labor practices, and the highest standards of quality and safety."

It continued, "Another milestone achievement is the successful re-establishment of the Palisades training program under the watchful gaze of INPO to establish a highly skilled workforce for the plant's operation. The reconstitution of the plant's Control Room Simulator and restoration of Operator training program are both complete and the Training Building, which had been mothballed for future demolition, is now a bustling hub of industry veterans and talented new associates. As a result, 26 Palisades Licensed Operators are currently completing requalification classes to maintain their federal operating licenses and two initial Operator classes are in session, with a third Operator class in the pipeline to begin later this year. In addition, this sets the stage for imminent restoration of Palisades Maintenance and Technical training programs."

Major plant work is also underway to ensure reliable and safe operations for the plant's extended operational life, including offsite refurbishment of the generator exciter and restoration of reactor vessel's operational integrity in preparation for a deep chemical cleaning of the plant's reactor cooling system. "On the near horizon, inspection of the reactor vessel internals and steam generators will occur along with long-term investments in preventive maintenance, equipment repairs, replacements, upgrades, and modifications, as part of the site's robust restart project plan. Other critical activities, such as the ordering of new fuel for the reactor and long-lead part procurement, are also underway.

"In the regulatory space, we have made significant progress toward reauthorization of extended operations, submitting five of the major licensing submittals to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and actively engaging in public meetings as a part of that process. The NRC has been notified of our intent to pursue subsequent license renewal to extend the plant's operational life.

"With the conditional commitment of up to $1.52 billion for a loan guarantee from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s Loan Programs Office (LPO) as well as the critical financial support from both the State of Michigan and Holtec, we are on track to accelerate the tempo for a successful restart of Palisades. Under DOE's conditional commitment, Holtec has to satisfy certain technical, legal, environmental, and financial conditions before DOE enters into definitive financing documents and funds the loan. Through strategic partnerships, such as our long term power purchase agreements with rural, not-for-profit energy cooperatives – Wolverine Power and Hoosier Energy – we are bolstering the region's transition to clean energy.

"Separately from the Palisades restart, we have also made early headway in our commitment to site Holtec's first two small modular reactors (SMRs) adjacent to the existing 800-megawatt plant. When constructed, our twin SMR-300 reactors, which are designed to produce a minimum of 300-megwatts power per unit, will nearly double the Michigan site's total carbon-free generation capacity. Preliminary siting activities are underway with filing of the Construction Permit Application for the two SMRs targeted for 2026.

"As we celebrate these milestones, it bears repeating that this historic progress would not be possible without the broad support Palisades continues to receive from our partners at the federal, state, and local levels, in addition to the local community and the nuclear industry at large."

It concluded, "We remain committed to upholding the highest standards of excellence and safety as we successfully restart the plant, providing reliable, safe, and carbon-free energy to the region. Together, we are shaping the future of nuclear energy and making a positive impact on our communities and the environment."

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SPORTS

Mayne crowned discus state champ

Lawton's Mason Mayne earned an MHSAA D3 Boy's Track and Field Championship in the Discus with a throw of 166'9". Mayne also was the runner-up in the Shot Put with a throw of 60'1". The junior earned his third all-state status in shot put and his second all-state honor in discus.

Paw Paw pitcher set for college level

Jake Hindenach of Paw Paw throws a pitch to the plate during the regular season.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW – Jake Hindenach closed out his Paw Paw baseball career last weekend with a strong senior season.

Paw Paw finished the season at 22-11 overall after a 9-4 loss to Three Rivers in a district semifinal game.

He was on the team as a sophomore which went from 3-19 to 15-10. He was all-state as a junior. He batted .420 and had 17 doubles, three home runs and 24 extra bases.

As he was coming into the final three weeks of the season, Hindenach was batting around .500 with five home runs and six triples.

As a pitcher, he got off to an impressive start with 45 strikeouts in his first 25 innings, 1.5 ERA and a fastball of up to 94 miles an hour.

"I've pitched all four years but this is my best year," Hindenach said. "My fastball has been dominant. I've been up to 95. My slider has been working well. Overall, it's been my control too."

In one of his games this year, he threw a two-hitter and had 13 strikeouts on five innings against Three Rivers. He threw three innings and had nine strikeouts against Decator.

"It's been little starts like that throughout the year," Hindenach said

He had two home runs in one game against Sturgis to help Paw Paw take the lead both times.

"This is probably the best team I've been on in my four years," Hindenach said. "We're playing well as a team."

Hindenach also played varsity basketball and soccer. He's committed to Kellogg Community College for baseball.

"Its a good program and there coach is known to be one of the best JUCO coaches in the state. It's a good program for development."

Gobles girls track team seventh in the state

Front L - R: Stacey Austin, Charlotte Zantello
Back L - R: Arman Bhugoea, Alex Lee, Eli Huizenga, Ethan Wait, Claire Bodin, Olivia Sweet, Amelia Fortis, Narissa Cannon, Litzy Ostiguin, Abby Pattison, Ella Ringel, Aly Tripp, Deanna Wood

By John Raffel

GOBLES --- Gobles girls track team was seventh in the state with 25 points at Saturday's Division 4 meet in Hudsonville.

The Ladies started off the scoring for the day with a sixth-place finish in the 3200 Meter relay running a season best time of 10:14.38.

The 800 Meter relay team scored next with an exciting third place finish after running in the 2nd of 5 total heats. They overcame the bad fortune of dropping the baton at the regional meet to take home a medal in this event for the fourth year in a row with a time of 1:47.08.

"The most exciting event of the day was the 400 meter relay team who beat the previous D4 state record," coach Andrew Wood said. "The only bad part about it was there was another team just ahead of us who beat the old record by 0.48 seconds faster than we did. We would have been state champions at any other D4 State meet in history, except this one. This team of Deanna Wood, Daisy Estrada, Liz Woodard, and Aly Tripp brought home a 2nd place finish, which is the 3rd year in a row we have placed in the top 3 in this event. Nice job ladies. Overall the Ladies team finished in 7th Place, possibly the highest finish in school history."

Libby Smith brought home the most points for the Tigers and won individual medals by placing 5th in both the 1600 and 3200 meter runs to add to her 3200 relay medal. She lowered her own school record in the 3;200 and took 7 seconds off of her 1600 meter time.

"We will miss the seniors' leadership and talent," Wood said.

Coach Marc Kline's boy squad was 38th in the state with 5 points.

For the boys the 4x100m relay team placed 4th running 44.56. The team included Eli Huizenga, Alex Lee, Nathan Ray, Mason Mansfield. For Eli and Alex, this year's state finals was their 3rd in a row and they improved on their 7th place finish in 2023 in the 4x100 m relay and their 10th place finish in 2022.

Paw Paw golfers shoot 336 at regional

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW – Paw Paw's golf team competed in the golf Region 9 tourney on May 28 at Bedford Valley Golf Course.

Gull Lake won it with 302, followed by Mason at 305, Jackson Northwest 311, Parma Western 322, St. Joseph 323, Harper Creek and Vicksburg 325, Marshall 332 and Paw Paw 336.

Scorers for Paw Paw were Ben Miller 74, Tyler Klett 82, Brady Holzworth 88, Fisher Edwards 92 and Bryce Barnett 93.

Mattawan played in the Division I Region I boys tournament on May 29 at Lincoln Golf Course.

Winners were Portage Central at 310, followed by Forest Hills Northern 313, Rockford 317, Mattawan 319, Grandville 331, Kalamazoo Loy Norrix 333 and West Ottawa 336.

The top three teams advanced to the state finals and Mattawan missed advancing by two strokes.

Top scorers for Mattawan were Matthew Novak (76), Brian Garver (76), Griffin McClish (79), Eason Haller (88) and Boston Bilek (91).

Lawton played in the Division 4 regional at Coldwater Golf Course on May 30. Scorers for Lawton were Levi Brooks (96), Kaedon Miller (99), Connor Triemstra (101) and Nolan Collins (103).

Gobles did not have a scoring team but was led by Tucker Greffe with a 104.

Mattawan baseball team falls in district

By John Raffel
Correspondent

MATTAWAN – A fine baseball season ended for Mattawan on Saturday June 1 with a 4-3 loss to Portage Central.

Mattawan ended its regular season on May 28 with a 6-4 win over Grandville.

Mattawan softball

Mattawan's softball season ended on May 28 in the predistrict with a 10-2 loss to Portage Central. The team was coached by Alicia Smith.

Mattawan soccer

Mattawan's soccer team ended its season on May 28 with a 2-1 loss to Portage Central. The previous week, Mattawan had beaten Portage Northern 7-0 in a soccer district first round game.

Mattawan boys lacrosse

Mattawan's outstanding boys lacrosse season came to an end on May 29 with a 12-6 loss to Bryon Center in a regional 10 game.

Mattawan had previously defeated Vicksburg 18-4 and Caledonia 17-10 in regional action.

Mattawan girls soccer

Mattawan's girls soccer season ended at 11-7-1 recently with a 13-8 loss to Grand Rapids Northview in regional action.

Matt Stephens was the coach for Mattawan, which ended its regular season.

Paw Paw softball

Paw Paw's softball season ended on June 1 with a loss to Otsego 6-5 during a district semifinal game.

The team was coached this season by Mike Mottl.

Lawton senior ends strong softball career

Ella Richter

By John Raffel
Correspondent

LAWTON – Ella Richter is a Lawton softball senior who has completed another impressive season for her team.

Richter said she's in the MHSAA record book for triples, stolen bases and batting average (.641). She was awarded this status after her sophomore season.

"There's a number of people who qualify for it," Richter said. "My junior season was pretty good, not as good, I guess, as my sophomore season. I still got all-conference first team. I batted 500."

Richter had a delayed start to her season because of shou;der surgery. But in her first game back, she batted 5-of-6. Earlier this month, she was still only batting since she was not back to 100 percent healthy. She plays shortstop in high school and is a utility player in travel ball and is set to play that role on the college level.

The shoulder surgery was from overuse of her arm, she indicated.

But it never seemed to affect her ability to rip the cover off the ball. Being able to read the pitch was a key asset, Richter said.

"Our season was hard but we're starting to climb a bit," Richter said late in the year. We're a very young team. This was a building year for us."

Richter said she'll be playing softball at NCAA Division II Gannon University.

"They contacted me," she said. "They looked at my recruiting video. I've been playing softball as long as I can remember."

Lawrence softball team falls in district semifinal

By John Raffel
Correspondent

The Lawrence Tigers fell to Michigan Lutheran in the district semifinal, 12-2.

In the top of the first inning, the Tigers got on the board after Hailey Camp doubled, scoring Leslie Reed. In the bottom of the first, Michigan Lutheran was tough to stop, bringing in six runs (6-1).

Though the score was 6-1 going into the bottom of the second, the Tiger defense tightened up only allowing the Titans one more run until inning five. Hailey Camp contributed on the mound, striking out seven Titans and only allowing three hits from innings 2-through-4.

In the top of the third, Lilianna Gonzalez hit in Alyssa Coombs bringing the score to 7-2.

Although the Tigers continued fighting, the Titans would take a large lead ending the game in the bottom of the fifth 12-2.

7 hits were earned by the Tigers. Hailey Camp led going 3 for 3 with 1 double, 2 singles, and 1 RBI. Other hits were contributed by Lilianna Gonzalez (1 hit, 1 RBI), Ashley Reed (1 hit), Alyssa Coombs (1 hit, 1 run), and Kaylin Leyva (1 hit). Leslie Reed earned a walk that turned into a run.

Overall record for the team was 10-16. The coach is Ashley Butler.

Lawton thrower is state champion in discus

By John Raffel
Correspondent

LAWTON – Mason Mayne was state champions for Lawton in the Division 3 finals on Saturday at Kent City with a throw of 166-9. He was also second in the shot put with a throw of 60-1.

Lawton wound up with 18 points for the boys to tie for 18th place.

The 4x200 relay team of Kal Motter Jack Fletcher, Greyson Burrous and Aiden Obrien was 21st in 1:33.13.

For the girls in the high jump, Alexis Girolami and Gabriella Holloway tied for 23rd with jumps of 4 feet, 8 inches.

Lawton baseball

Lawton's baseball season ended on June 1 with a 14-0 loss to Watervliet.

Highlights of the season for Lawton were a 15-4 victory in six innings over Allegan, a 11-5 win over Saugatuck and a 9-8 win over Delton-Kellogg.

Lawton softball

Lawton's softball team ended its season on June 1 with a 15-5 loss in five innings to Union City.

Lawton soccer

Lawton's girls soccer team lost to Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep 8-2 in the soccer district tournament. Lawton's season ended with a 3-4-0 record in the Southwestern Athletic Conference Valley and 6-8-1 overall.

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VIEWPOINT

NO FUN BEING TRAPPED IN AN ELEVATOR

MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
PUBLISHER

Have you ever been trapped in an elevator?

Until last week, I could unequivocally say "no." Now having been around for a while, I have ridden up and down on my share of elevators and never gave it a second thought that one might go kaput. But there I was trapped on the eighth floor with two others- one a 6'9" professional basketball player and another muscular moving guy. Oh and I forgot to mention, the mover also had a huge couch in the elevator that made for very little room for the three of us.

So what do you do? The door wouldn't open and none of the controls worked. We were completely enclosed. We pressed the floor buttons over and over and nothing. We pressed the emergency buttons and nothing.

We spent our time joking about the situation and googling what to do when your stuck in an elevator. Nothing seemed to work. We were sweating profusely because there was no air conditioning. And there was no room to move, we had to stand in one place because the sofa took up two-thirds of the elevator space.

I called my fiancé, who always answers her phone, but in this instance, she didn't. I called a second and third time, no answer. Later, I learned her phone was on vibrate mistakenly. We had been trapped for 10 minutes, then 20, and now we were long past a half hour.

I thanked God, it was us in the elevator and not three small children or three elderly adults. It could have been devastating to children or the elderly.

I was getting frustrated. All three of us pushed in unison on the door in an attempt to pry it open to no avail. We scoured the elevator for a piece of thin metal that we might be able to wedge in the door, again to no avail.

I learned more about professional basketball overseas than I ever want to know. Ditto the intricacies of moving furniture. The jokes and conversation began to recede, as frustration and genuine fright took over.

The mover started to push up pieces of the ceiling in the hope he could find some kind of manual override above us. That didn't work either. It was like all power had shut down and we were going to be best of buddies until someone realized we were not where we should be.

We tried the emergency button again and someone finally answered after several rings. After taking our information, they indicated they were 45 to 60 minutes away. Dejectedly, we hung up and decided we would have to wait until the elevator repair people arrived- another hour after having been trapped for an hour.

Then it occurred to one of us to call the fire department. We did just that and within fifteen minutes they arrived and were able to pry the door open and release us to the world. Why we didn't think about that an hour earlier I will never know, but now you know, if you get stuck in an elevator, the first call you should is to the fire department. God Bless those first responders. I can't thank them enough for coming to our aid.

LIFE AS PERFORMANCE ART

G CORWIN STOPPEL

Five, ten or more centuries ago, the purpose of etiquette was to demonstrate partiality, respect, and submission to one's "betters."

For example, when the lord or lady of the manor passed by, men were expected to take off their hats and bow, women too to bow or curtsy. Senior clergy got that treatment too, from lay members paying their wages and clerics of lower status. Lay people were generally at the bottom of the pile. Always

It was complicated too. There were 20-plus orders of ordained clergy, starting from sub-deacon on to cardinals and popes. In between were deacons, cathedral deans, rural deans, archdeacons and more.

Everyone was expected to know their place and treat person higher up the ranks with the etiquette they deserved. Whether they were good or bad people, their social standing required respect.

Nobility started with barons and moved up to counts (or in England, earls), marquises and dukes. In France there were seven degrees of marquises. In German states, anyone who owned land was a freiherr or baron.

Not long ago, it was a matter of etiquette to dress for the occasion, including shopping. Mother's lips tightened whenever she saw friends wearing hair rollers ("lobster cages" she called them) in the fruit and vegetable department at the grocery. She saw it as disrespectful to others. It was always white gloves and a hat when you entered stores.

Father was the same way, wearing ties, polished shoes and a fedora. There was a sense of conformity until the late 1960s. When I asked what the point was of wearing a tie, he said, "Show some respect when you're meeting my friends" and handed me one of them.

The Olds expected gentlemen of all ages to doff their hat or cap in the presence of ladies or inside a building.

That etiquette minefield involved children too. At home and in school, we were drilled on how to greet and speak to adults. Being respectful was the key point.

Girls wore skirt and blouses at school, with sweaters in cooler weather. Shoes had to be dress style, never sneakers except in the gym or on the playground.

Young women were told their shoes could not be too shiny because they might reflect up and expose their "unawares" or "smalls," as Mother delicately called them. That is still a municipal ordinance in some parts of Italy.

Boys had to wear shirts with tails tucked in and dress pants. And then there was Brylcreem; no little dab would ever do a respectable boy; we needed enough so we didn't look like some long-haired hippy freak. Corduroys were considered too informal; blue jeans or any other color of denim were out of the question.

To make sure children learned proper deportment and respect, there were rule books. My sister and I each got copies of Emily Post's Book of Etiquette for our 10th birthdays. Add to that the Boy Scout Handbook and Brooks Brothers etiquette primers and I was out of excuses for misbehaving.

The 1960s moved us toward less formality and a radical break from the old decorum. The free speech movement made room for conversations about subjects once considered private and personal.

Soon it wasn't just the hippies and their allies; it went mainstream when talk show hosts Phil, Maury, Sally and others took over afternoon programming. Each tried to outdo the others by being more shocking. Eventually it slithered down to the bottom of decency with Jerry Springer.

People lapped up this trash. Most viewers denied ever watching it but tried hard not to miss a segment.

Some might say this continues today with political "debates" more like trash talk before professional wrestling matches or roller derby. I can't figure out why we let candidates get away with behavior we abhor in other people or ourselves.

All things considered, we have moved from obsessing over etiquette to what we today call "boundaries" set anywhere we want.

Etiquette has always been changing, from medieval chivalry to Emily Post to ...

Few of us wish to return to the hardcore conformity, rigidity and even fear of what others might think of us. We do not want to obsess over what the neighbors will say if we mow the lawn wearing tacky shorts or do not go to church on Sunday morning. Society seems less concerned about obedience than in the past.

Boundaries are a perpetual moving target. Once, we kept our private lives to ourselves, believing not everyone was entitled to our secrets. Now, even though we're expected tell everything, my choice of boundaries is not to do so.

After the 2016 election, someone asked who I voted for. I said that was my private business. "But I need to know who you voted for," said the woman. "Sorry," I said, but I am not interested in your needs."

One improvement is more people near the top rung of the economic latter realize their responsibility to tangibly show respect to everyone they encounter. In a democracy, that's the way it should be.

Gobles High School senior is guest speaker at Gobles Memorial Day ceremony

GOBLES - A Gobles High School senior was the guest speaker at the 2024 Gobles Memorial Day ceremony, Monday, May 27.

Tristan Harbaugh told those gathered at the Gobles City Park, "I am honored to speak to you today in observance of Memorial Day and to pay respects to American soldiers killed in the service of our country. I want to thank the City of Gobles for the opportunity and the honor to speak here today, especially Mayor Carol Johnson, who I usually just call "Grandma," and Rick and Paula Sipes for making sure the ceremony is such a special occasion every year. I am proud to have grown up in a town that makes sure Memorial Day is given it the honor it deserves."

Harbaugh, who turned 18 three weeks ago, said to those gathered, "I am sure many of you are asking yourself today, why is a person this young speaking, and what is it that I might have to say that will give this important holiday the respect that it deserves?"

Harbaugh said, "I hope you are asking that question, because it should be asked of me, but I think it should be asked of all of us: what do any of us have to say, to offer, to do justice to the purpose of Memorial Day. I will do my best to answer that question this morning."

"I want to tell you about something I saw last summer and see if you can picture it with me as I tell you about it," said Harbaugh.

"I saw the rifle of an American soldier sticking point down into the ground by its bayonet. Resting on top of the rifle, the dented helmet of a United States Army infantryman. In the center of the dent near the helmet's crown, an almost perfectly round hole shows where the German bullet pierced the helmet, and then the skull, and then the brain, instantly ending the life of the soldier wearing it," said Harbaugh.

"The rifle marks the spot where the soldier was buried, in a small courtyard next to a chapel near the place he had fallen on Utah Beach at Normandy. Around it, 364 other rifles are stuck in the dirt marking the place where, in the words posted there, 364 other American souls slept their final sleep," said Harbaugh.

Last summer, Harbaugh was "incredibly fortunate" to take a trip with his parents to visit World War II sites in Europe that are personally significant to his family.

Harbaugh said it was at the northern coast of France, at a museum near the famous beaches of Normandy and the D-Day Invasion, looking at this rifle and the photos that help tell the story of what happened in June 1944, almost exactly 80 years ago.

"I was there to learn and to witness and to honor the servicemen and women who fought and broke through the deadly perils of the D-Day invasion, including my great-grandfather, Walter J. Johnson, and to pay my respects to the many thousands who fell there," said Harbaugh.

Harbaugh said in the town closest to the museum, which is no bigger than Gobles, nearly every single house had one thing in common: an American flag flying outside their front door. "This sight made me take a huge step back. In a village, 3,883 miles from home, where the residents are French and much of the population doesn't even speak English, they remember and honor American soldiers who sacrificed all they had in the defense of freedom. And they fly those American flags every single day of the year," said Harbaugh.

"There's something to be learned from these people: the constant appreciation of fallen soldiers. The inhabitants of this town are grateful every day, 80 years later, for the men and women who defended their land," said Harbaugh.

Harbaugh said as he toured the sites of June 1944, he learned of incredible bravery and incredible tragedy. "The American Cemetery overlooking the sea is a field of thousands of white crosses, row upon row of fallen American soldiers, and the sight of it took my breath away."

He added, "But still, as I observed the sites of the D-Day invasion, I felt a new gratitude. It wasn't just for the soldiers of WWII, but for all soldiers who fought for our freedom, and especially for those who sacrificed their lives, the most precious thing we have to give."

According to Harbaugh, of the 416,000 American soldiers killed in World War II, 19-year-olds were killed more than any other age. "Not even old enough to drink a beer, they still laid down their lives. They were my age. If they were old enough to die for our freedoms, for my freedom, then I am old enough to stand in front of you to remember them with gratitude; and to ask you to do the same," said Harbaugh.

Harbaugh said, "It's not just the soldiers of World War II. It's the soldiers of all our country's battles. Many of you know my grandpa, Dick Johnson, as a man of few words, though it's because he listens more than he talks, and when he talks, he will often share stories of his experiences as a soldier in Vietnam. His father, Walter Johnson, who lived just a few blocks from here, was a man of even fewer words as I understand it. I met my great-grandfather, Johnson, but he died before I was old enough to remember him.

"The beaches of Normandy are 3,800 miles away, but Walter Johnson lived right over there (as Harbaugh pointed to his grandmother's home), and he raised my grandfather in Gobles, who raised my mother in Gobles, who raised me in Gobles. I am only here because my great-grandfather was not killed in Europe in 1944, but I've been told he would tell stories of how many times he escaped death, or how many times a brother-in-arms was killed and did not return to their small towns to raise a family and see the generations that followed," said Harbaugh.

He added, "I am also only here because my grandfather was not killed in Vietnam, but from time to time he tells his own stories of escaping death, and of losing brothers in arms. He is here today, to pay tribute, as he does every year, marching in the parade in his uniform and firing the rifles in salute."

Harbaugh said Memorial Day is the day to hear these stories again, to remember those lost in service to our country. "Those soldiers were grandparents; parents; siblings; and friends. They were the sons and daughters of people who come from Gobles and places just like Gobles all over this country. Much like those people in France, I believe every day is a day to hold their memories near and dear to our hearts. We all remember today, because it's Memorial Day and there's a parade and a long weekend, but what about tomorrow?"

Harbaugh concluded, "Earlier this year I was given a gift reminding me that freedom isn't free. It's probably the most meaningful gift I've ever received. This IR patch (as he held it up) was given to me by a friend who served in the military during a time of combat, and he explained that the patch is worn on combat uniforms during nighttime operations so a soldier can recognize friend from foe. So, a soldier can always tell, even when it's dark and dangerous, who is on the same side as us. He gave it to me as a message about how important it is to know who is there with you and there for you: who is your friend and who is fighting for the same things you are.

This patch serves as a reminder to me to never take what we have for granted, and when thinking of American soldiers, and especially the ones who gave their lives in defense of freedom, remember their sacrifice, but never forget they were the grandparents, parents, siblings, and friends. They came from places like Gobles where we remember them today with gratitude for all they gave for us."

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

MEMORIAL DAY ADDRESS REMEMBERED

Dear Editor:

The following is the Memorial Day address delivered in Marcellus, MI, by Pastor Scott Wiles of the Trinity Bible Church, Marcellus.

I cannot stand before you today and say anything that has not already been said, but since this is Memorial Day – it is a great day for reminder and remembrance.

Remember, as our nation has set aside a day to do so, all of those men and women who gave their very lives for this nation and the freedom's we had in this nation.

Yes, I said had – maybe you can't see it so obviously right at the moment, but as the years continue to unfold – you will find out what Benjamin Franklin was actually concerned about when he wrote the words "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." I will not expound on that any further, but to quote the late President Reagan as he said:

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

While we still have the basic freedom in this nation to speak actual truth, and not some persons idea of it based on their feelings or their lusts, I will also remind you of the words of Jesus the Christ as written by the Apostle John:

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Now, this Jesus, being the Son of man by his birth of a virgin woman – and the Son of God having been sent down from Heaven; being the living embodiment of truth, love, and life:

also died sacrificing himself – for his very enemies, that's us folks, God having raised him from the dead the third day so that whosoever would believe in him and know him and trust him could be saved.

Yes, it is a fact that NOT every one will believe – and some will and have in fact gone to Hell.

Just a few thousand years ago a man named Abram was told directly by God to leave his home and go to place that God would show him. He did not question it – he packed up and left. It is recorded that Abram believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.

We also must believe God whole heartedly in order to receive the righteousness that Jesus died to give us – not for our obedience to law or commands – but simply because we believe in Jesus and the life he now lives beyond the horrific sacrifice he made for the salvation of anyone who would believe and trust him.

In the 20th Chapter of John's gospel, Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

I don't know what you believe as I stand here today. Undoubtedly there are some who think that I'm backward or ignorant. That I somehow live in the 21st century as relic of a dark time and that I don't understand the great social progress that's been made in our country without that darn Bible. If only you trusted God, you could see that any knowledge, wisdom, and enlightenment comes from Him and that I am not the one backing up into the darkness of sin hell bent on destroying everything that God has created.

Let this be a warning to all who will hear….

America is NO greater that the belief of its people! There are many once great nations on the scrap heap of history. God warned Israel time and again and yet instead of listening to him "everyone did what was right in their own eyes". God warns us "There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"

Believe in freedom, believe in justice, believe the God who is truth and Jesus Christ the Son. That our country may once again be the beacon of hope for the world.

Jesus died to give us life – God gave us this nation of Freedom and hope. Remember those soldiers who have gone before and consider your ways today.

For those of you who say that you believe God, and you trust in Jesus – does your life reflect what you say you believe?

Only two have ever offered to die for your freedom Jesus Christ and the American Soldier.

Remember and honor those American Soldiers today who died for our country and turn to Jesus believing to save your soul.

Neal H. Ferguson

Mooney named Kiwanis Club May Student of the Month

Mitchell Mooney has been named the Paw Paw Kiwanis Club May Student of the Month. Mooney was nominated by teacher Maria Reo who said of Mooney, "Mitchell is both a stellar student and a phenomenal person. He works very hard in his classes and is not afraid of a challenge. He has been an incredible Teacher's Assistant (TA) and goes so far about and beyond what I ask of him. He is always looking for ways to be helpful and offer more support. He has volunteered to work with struggling students and is very calm and patient while doing so. He also volunteers his time to mentor students at the elementary school outside of school. I have witnessed Mitchell grow so much over his high school career and am consistently impressed by how he serves as a role model for his peers. Mooney will be attending Grand Valley State University in the fall where he will pursue studies in political science, then continue his education in pre-law. Shown in photo, from left, Patrick Gorenchan, Kiwanis Club member, Mitchell Mooney, and Maria Reo, nominating teacher.

Photo courtesy/Paw Paw Kiwanis Club

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DNR introduces Paw Paw River State Game Area

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources announces the establishment of the Paw Paw River State Game Area, a new, 350-acre parcel in Van Buren County's Waverly Township. The DNR will manage this area for wildlife habitat, protecting vulnerable species and enhancing public access to hunting lands and waterways in southwest Michigan.

The new state game area will be an exciting addition to southern Michigan, where most of the state's residents live but where public hunting lands are limited.

"We are thrilled for this land purchase, as it reinforces our dedication and the dedication of our partners to wildlife conservation and better, broader access to public recreation," said Mark Mills, southwest regional manager for the DNR Wildlife Division.

Named after its distinguishing geographical feature, the new state game area includes 1.2 miles of frontage on the Paw Paw River. The river stretches 68 miles through southwest Michigan, beginning at village of Paw Paw and eventually joining the St. Joseph River near Benton Harbor.

Increased public access

Located a short distance from the cities of Kalamazoo and Benton Harbor, the state game area will continue to provide opportunities to local hunters and trappers where public access is limited. In Van Buren County, public hunting lands are scarce, with only .02 acres of public hunting land per capita. The property was previously enrolled in the Commercial Forest Program, which allowed public hunting, trapping and fishing. Under DNR ownership, the state game area will continue to accommodate these activities, with improved access and parking.

Anglers and those who enjoy other water-based recreation such as canoeing and kayaking will also benefit from river access and fishing opportunities for resident smallmouth bass, walleye and northern pike, as well as seasonal runs of coho and Chinook salmon and steelhead.

Conservation partnerships

The DNR's partner in conservation, the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, recognized the stretch of land along the Paw Paw River for its current and future importance. The area shares a .5-mile boundary with two conservation easements owned by the conservancy, totaling 398 acres. The conservancy helped facilitate the land acquisition process with the previous landowners, who had expressed desire for the land to remain protected.

Kaleigh Winkler, land protection director for the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, said, "The establishment of this new state game area adds to SWMLC's land protection efforts along this critical riparian corridor identified as a high-priority protection area. Maintaining these floodplain forests protects water quality and all the wildlife that call these important communities home."

These conservation easements prevent water pollution by protecting critical riparian lands along the banks of these high-quality tributaries and preserving wetland functionality, potential for groundwater recharge (how water from the surface reaches the underground aquifers that store fresh water) and habitat value.

The purchase of this parcel secures the protection of vital habitat in a corridor identified as highly important for climate resiliency and wildlife and plant biodiversity. Together, the properties protect hundreds of acres of contiguous habitat for wildlife and plant species to flourish.

The role of floodplain forests

The land is primarily floodplain forest, a crucial habitat type formed at the meeting point of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and a priority habitat in Michigan's Wildlife Action Plan.

"These places are the foundational building blocks of the food web," said Kristin Wildman, field operations manager for the DNR Wildlife Division's southwest region.

The movement of water over floodplain forests creates diverse microhabitats for a variety of wildlife and plant species. During the spring, flooding from the raised river has been shown to thaw soils faster, which allows insects to hatch earlier, creating an available food source for migrating songbirds. The snaking river provides several channel cutoffs and oxbows that create critical pockets of habitat for fish, amphibians, reptiles and waterfowl.

"Floodplain forests create natural corridors for wildlife to travel and plants to spread, which is especially critical in more fragmented landscapes like southern Michigan," said Don Poppe, DNR wildlife biologist in Van Buren County. Crossing developments such as roads or infrastructure are dangerous and often impossible for slower-moving species such as turtles, snakes or salamanders. "These floodplain and riparian areas continue to be irreplaceable corridors that act to conserve biodiversity by allowing safe passage."

These forests are uniquely valuable for wildlife habitat, and also for people, as they improve water quality by filtering out water pollutants and sediment, storing access water during flooding events and recharging aquifers with ground water.

For future generations

"The establishment of the Paw Paw River State Game Area provides an immediate benefit to wildlife and ensures stability during an unpredictable future," Poppe said. "If development occurred on this parcel, we would expect it to impact the river, fish, wildlife, vegetation and the natural aesthetic. With this purchase, we can ensure that current and future generations of humans and wildlife can continue to depend on this area as a natural oasis amid development."

The property was purchased with a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant that supports projects providing for natural resource protection and outdoor recreation. The area is open to the public with no time restrictions or entrance fee. The property can be accessed by river or land, with parking available along the roadside of 42nd Avenue. Work is underway to install property boundary signs, and one parking lot will be developed on the western side of the property.

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Deputies save woman attempting to jump from bridge

Deputies say they were able to pull back a distraught woman who was sitting on the edge of a bridge over US-131, dangling her feet over the freeway, because bystanders had gathered to help.

It happened around 2:30 p.m. Tuesday on the W Michigan Avenue bridge over southbound US-131, in Oshtemo Township, according to the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office.

Authorities stopped traffic on southbound US-131 and Michigan Avenue, according to the office.

Area Church Services

PAW PAW

ALMENA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
27503 CR 375
Pastor Len Schoenherr
668-2811
www.almenaumc.com
SUNDAY
Worship - 11 a.m.
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FRIDAY: AA- 8 p.m.

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COVEY HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
33566 28th Avenue
(corner of 28th & M-40)
269-628-2139
www.coveyhill.org
Pastor Daniel Wilson
SUNDAY
Worship @10:45am
Nursery & Children's Church provided
Messages available on YouTube

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FAITH OF THE APOSTLES CURCH
34580 M-40 Highway
Elder David Harn
1 (269) 512-4586
SUNDAY
Christian Education - 10 a.m.
Wroship Service - 11:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
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SUNDAY
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www.pawpaw.church
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420 W. Michigan Ave.
Pastor Len Schoenherr
657-7727
SUNDAY
Service time - 9:30 a.m.
Visit: www.pawpawumc.com
Online worship at Facebook page "Paw Paw United Methodist Church"

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RED ARROW MINISTRIES
31133 Red Arrow Highway
Rev. G. Ben Bowater, IV
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SUNDAY
Worship - 9:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.
www.redarrowministries.org
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Worship 9:30 a.m.

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ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
500 Paw Paw Street
Rev. Fr. Alan P. Jorgensen
657-4459
SATURDAY
Vigil - 4:00 p.m.
SUNDAY
Masses- 8 a.m. & 11 a.m.
Holy days & Daily Masses
Consult Bulletin

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Pastor Phillip Phifer
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School: 657-5921
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www.truthchurchpawpaw.com
Pastor Steven Green
657-5042
SUNDAY
School - 10 a.m.
Evening Service - 6 p.m.
THURSDAY
Bible Study - 7 p.m.

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MATTAWAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
23680 Front Ave.
668-3263
www.mattawancc.com
mattawancommunitychurch@gmail.com
Pastor Rev. Jonathan Lam
SUNDAY
Worship - 10:25 a.m.

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ST. JOHN BOSCO CATHOLIC CHURCH
23830 Front Ave.
Rev. Fr. Alan P. Jorgensen
668-3312
www.stjohnbosco.com
SUNDAY
Mass - 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.
SATURDAY
4 p.m.

GOBLES

NORTHPOINT MINISTRIES OF GOBLES
04077 M40
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northpointgobles@gmail.com
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Monday: 7 pm - REFRESH Bible Study
Wednesday: 7pm - Prayer Meeting

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DAILY HARVEST MINISTRIES
117 S.Franklin Street
Pastor Jack Shanley
SUNDAY
Worship - 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study - 6 p.m.

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Wednesday Bible Study & Prayer 5:00 p.m.
facebook.com/DecaturBibleChurch
http://www.decaturbible.org

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Decatur New Hope Community Church
319 ½ West Delaware Street
Pastor Ross Tarantino
SUNDAY
Worship Service-10:00 a.m.
TUESDAY
Bible Study-1:00 p.m.
269-423-8136
info@decaturnewhopecommunity.net

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GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
231 W. James St.
674-4381
Pastor Brian Vince
SUNDAY
School - 10 a.m.
Morning Worship - 11 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Service - 7 p.m.

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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Corner of Exchange & James Street
674-8381
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which is pending in the 36 th Circuit Court of Van Buren County before Judge David J. DiStefano, in relation to a motor vehicle collision that occurred on November 15, 2023, in Van Buren County, Michigan. Failure to take action as required under the Michigan Rules of Court within 21 days of this publication notice, could result in a default judgment being entered against you. The Case number is 24-073699-NI.
Answer must be filed with the 36 th Circuit Court in the County of Van Buren. Contact Paul E. Shibley at (231) 725-8444 for more information.
(5-30)(6-13)

STATE OF MICHIGAN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT - FAMILY DIVISION VAN BUREN COUNTY PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF HEARING REGARDING PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE
File No. 20247016 NC
Judge: Susan Metzger
IN THE MATTER OF TONY RAE WILLIS-BLANCHARD
TO ALL PERSONS, including: (specify non-custodial parent's name here, if applicable).
whose address is unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:
TAKE NOTICE: Tonya Rae Willis-Blanchard has filed a petition for name change.
A name change hearing will be held on July 10, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. at Van Buren County Probate Court, Courtroom #3 before Judge Susan Metzger to change the name of: Tonya Rae Willis-Blanchard to Tonya Rae Willis

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State of Michigan 7th Judicial District Judicial Circuit Conty Probate
ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION/ POSTING AND NOTICE OF ACTION
Case No. 24 0285 GC
Court: 1007 E. Wells St., South Haven, MI 49090
269-637-5258

Plaintiff:
Omni Community Credit Union
P.O. Box 1537
Battle Creek, MI 49016
Attorney:
Lewis Reed & Allen, P.C.
Lana M. Escamilla (P71275)
136 E. Michigan Ave., Suite 800
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269-388-7600
V
Defendant:
Samuel Turman
7-421 CO Rd. 378
Covert, MI 49043

TO: SAMUEL TURMAN IT IS ORDERED:
1. You are being sued in this court by the plaintiff to collect moneys due in the amount of 14,762.40, plus posting, filing costs, interest & attorney's fee. You must file your answer or take other action permitted by law in this court at the court address above on or before 28 days for the last publication. If you fail to do so, a default judgment may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint filed in this case.
2. A copy of this order shall be published once each week in Courier- Leader for three consecutive weeks, and proof of publication shall be filed in this court.
3. Court Officer Lew Koch shall post a copy of this order in the courthouse, and at Van Buren County Courthouse, Paw Paw, Michigan and at Van Buren District Library, Covert, Michigan for three continuous weeks, and shall file proof of posting in this court.
4. A copy of this order shall be sent to Samuel Turman at the last-known address by registered mail, return receipt requested, before the date of the last publication, and the affidavit of mailing shall be filed within court.
May 16, 2024
Judge Arthur H Clarke, III
P29110

State of Michigan Probate Court
Van Buren County
NOTICE TO CREDITORS DECEDENT'S ESTATE
Case No. 24-1098-DE
Judge Susan Metzger (P62867)
ESTATE OF KAY MARLENE RANDALL, deceased
Date of Birth: February 11, 1937 (2/11/1937)
TO ALL CREDITORS:
Creditors of the deccedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to the Van Buren County Probate Court, 212 Paw Paw St., Suite 220, Paw Paw, MI 49010, or Cindy Lou Sumner, 15080 County Rd. 653, Gobles, MI 49055, within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Kay Marlene Randall, died June, 29, 2020 (6/29/2020).
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to **Robert J. Baker, Attorney for Estate, or Cindy Loy Summer,** personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 Paw Paw Street, Suite 220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
May 28, 2024
Attorney:
Robert J. Baker P57964
225 Hubbard Street
Allegan, MI 49010
269-686-9448
Personal Representative(s):
Cindy Lou Summer
15080 County Rd. 653
Gobles, MI 49055
269-808-7017

State of Michigan Probate Court
Van Buren County
NOTICE TO CREDITORS DECEDENT'S ESTATE
Case No. 2024-1096-DE
Judge Susan Metzger (P62867)
ESTATE OF IMOGENE WANDA PUCKETT, AKA IMOGENE PUCKETT, deceased
Date of Birth: August 6,1930 (8/6/1930)
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Imogene Wanda Puckett, aka Imogene Puckett, died February 27, 2024 (2/27/2024).
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to **David A. Puckett,** personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 Paw Paw Street, Suite 220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
June 3, 2024
Attorney:
JENNINGS LAW OFFICE, PC
Craig P. Jennings P46953
610 Ship Street, Suite 200
St. Joseph MI 49085
(269) 983-0551
Personal Representative(s):
David A. Puckett
3484 Bacon School Road
St. Joseph MI 49085
(269) 486-7303

State of Michigan Probate Court
Van Buren County
NOTICE TO CREDITORS DECEDENT'S TRUST ESTATE
DECEDENT: JEANNE Y. GREVELDING
Date of Birth: September 1, 1928 (9/1/1928)
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent,Jeanne Y. Grevelding, who lived at 677 Hazen St. Paw Paw, Michigan 49079 died April 16, 2024 (4/16/2024)
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against JEANNE Y. GREVELDING, or THE JEANNE Y. GREVELDING IRREVOCABLE TRUST dated November 4, 1996, as amended and restated in total on August 29, 2022, and as amended on November 7, 2022, will be forever barred unless presented to **William J. Grevelding, Margaret A. Stiffler, and Thomas A. Grevelding,** the named successor co-trustees within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
May 31, 2024
Attorney:
Tyler J. Stewart P80750
DeMent and Marquardt, P.L.C.
211 East Water Street, Suite 401
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
(269) 343-2106
Successor co-trustees:
W illiam J. Grevelding,
308 W . Michigan Ave,
Apt. 3315
Paw Paw, Michigan 49079
(269) 539-0068
Margaret A. Stiffler
4366 W . Holt Road
Holt, Michigan 48842
(517) 881-7112
Thomas A. Grevelding,
6300 W . Michigan Ave,
Apt. A-15
Lansing, Michigan 48917
(517) 388-0334

State of Michigan 7th Judicial District Judicial Circuit County Probate
ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION/ POSTING AND NOTICE OF ACTION CASE NO. 23-0729-GC
Court address 1007 E. Wells St. South Haven, MI 49090
Court phone: 269-637-5259

Plaintiff(s):
Omni Community Credit Union
P.O. Box 1537
Battle Creek, MI 49016
Plaintiffs Attorney
Lewis Reed & Allen, P.C.
Lana M. Escamilla P71275
136 E. Michigan Ave.,
Suite 800
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269-388-7600
V
Defendant(s):
Nathaniel Howell
50316 M-43 114
Bangor, MI 49013

TO: NATHANIEL CHRISTOPHER HOWELL IT IS ORDERED:
1. You are being sued in this court by the plaintiff to collect moneys due in the amount of $20,994.58, plus posting, filling costs, interest & attorney's fees. You must file your answer or take other action permitted by law in this court at the court address above on or before 28 days for the last publication. If you fail to do so, a default judgment may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint filed in this case.
2. A copy of this order shall be published once each week in Courier-Leader for three (3) consecutive weeks, and proof of publication shall be filed in this court.
3. Court Officer Lew Koch shall post a copy of this order in the courthouse, and at Van Buren County Courthouse, Paw Paw, Michigan and at Van Buren District Library, Bangor, Michigan for three (3) continuous weeks, and shall file proof of posting in this court.
4. A copy of this order shall be sent to Nathaniel Christopher Howell at the last- known address by registered mail, return receipt requested, before the date of the last publication, and the affidavit of mailing shall be filed with this court.
May 16, 2024
Arthur H. Clarke, III P29110

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 p.m., on June 13, 2024. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. The Mortgage in default and being foreclosed is described as: Mortgage made by Lucinda Nower, a married woman, as mortgagor, to Nevada Funding LLC, a Nevada limited liability company as mortgagee ("Lender"), dated as of November 4, 2021 and recorded November 29, 2021 in Liber 1729, Page 743, Van Buren County Records, Michigan (the "Mortgage"). The amount due on the Mortgage as of the date of this Notice is $74,883.83. This amount does not reflect the total amount due on the Mortgage for any prepayment obligation due, and some or all of the amounts paid by Lender to collect the debt or to protect its rights under the Mortgage or otherwise due under the Mortgage, and may not reflect all credits attributable to the loan secured by the Mortgage. The Mortgage contains a power of sale and no suit or proceeding at law or in equity has been instituted to recover the debt secured by the Mortgage, or any part of the Mortgage. The public auction described above may be adjourned to a later date; and the specific location within the place of holding of the circuit court where the public auction is held may be designated by the sheriff or deputy sheriff conducting the sale. Lender will apply the sale proceeds to the amount due on the Mortgage as stated above, plus any amount subsequently paid by Lender to protect its interest in the property and interest on the amount due at the rate of 20.99 percent per annum. The mortgaged premises (collectively, the "Mortgaged Property") to be sold at foreclosure sale is located in the Village of Lawrence, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and is described more particularly as: THE SOUTH 42 FEET OF THE EAST 1/2 OF LOT 3, BLOCK 4, PHELP'S ADDITION TO THE VILLAGE OF LAWRENCE, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS. ALSO, THE NORTH 33 FEET OF THE EAST 1/2 OF LOT 2, BLOCK 4, OF SAID ADDITION. Commonly known as: 109 North 2nd Street, Lawrence, MI 49064 Tax Parcel No.: 80-44-204-003-00 Together with all tangible personal property and fixtures described in the Mortgage, including, but not limited to, the following: (a) Improvements. Any and all buildings, structures, improvements, fixtures, and appurtenances now and later placed on the Mortgaged Property, including, without limitation, all apparatus and equipment, whether or not physically affixed to the land or any building, which is used to provide or supply air cooling, air conditioning, heat, gas, water, light, power, refrigeration, ventilation, laundry, drying, dish washing, garbage disposal, or other services; and all elevators (if any), escalators (if any), and related machinery and equipment, fire prevention and extinguishing apparatus, security and access control apparatus, partitions, ducts, compressors, plumbing, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers, disposals, washers, dryers, awnings, storm windows, storm doors, screens, blinds, shades, curtains, curtain rods, mirrors, cabinets, paneling, rugs, attached floor coverings, furniture, pictures, antennas, pools, spas, pool and spa operation and maintenance equipment and apparatus, and trees and plants located on the Mortgaged Property; (b) Fixtures. All right, title, and interest of Borrower in and to all materials, supplies, equipment, apparatus, and other items now or later attached to, installed on or in the Land or the Improvements; (c) Personalty. All of the right, title, and interest of Borrower in and to all tangible personal property, whether now owned or later acquired by Borrower, including, but not limited to, water rights (to the extent they may constitute personal property), all equipment, inventory, goods, consumer goods, accounts, chattel paper, instruments, money, deposit accounts, investment property, documents, minerals, crops, and timber (as those terms are defined in the Michigan Uniform Commercial Code) and that are now or at any later time located on, attached to, installed, placed, used on, in connection with, or are required for such attachment, installation, placement, or use on the Land, the Improvements, Fixtures, or on other goods located on the Land or Improvements, together with all additions, accessions, accessories, amendments, modifications to the Land or Improvements, extensions, renewals, and enlargements and proceeds of the Land or Improvements, substitutions for, and income and profits from, the Land or Improvements. All goods, machinery, tools, equipment (including fire sprinklers and alarm systems); building materials, air conditioning, heating, refrigerating, electronic monitoring, entertainment, recreational, maintenance, extermination of vermin or insects, dust removal, refuse and garbage equipment; vehicle maintenance and repair equipment; office furniture (including tables, chairs, planters, desks, sofas, shelves, lockers, and cabinets); safes, furnishings, appliances (including ice-making machines, refrigerators, fans, water heaters, and incinerators); rugs, carpets, other floor coverings, draperies, drapery rods and brackets, awnings, window shades, venetian blinds, curtains, other window coverings; lamps, chandeliers, other lighting fixtures; office maintenance and other supplies; The tangible personal property and fixtures constituting a part of the Mortgaged Property shall be sold together with the real estate in one foreclosure sale, in accordance with MCL 440.9604(1)(b) and MCL 440.9604(2)(b), respectively. There is no warranty in disposition relating to title, possession, quiet enjoyment, or any other matter as to any or all of the personal property and fixtures described above. The redemption period shall be six months from the date of sale pursuant to MCL 600.3240(8). Pursuant to MCL 600.3212(g), take notice that the mortgagor will be held responsible to the person who buys the Mortgaged Property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the Mortgaged Property during the redemption period, as further provided in MCL 600.3278. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Dated: May 6, 2024 Nevada Funding LLC, a Nevada limited liability company, Lender Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, P.L.C. By: Michael E. Moore Attorneys for Lender 99 Monroe Avenue NW, Suite 1200 Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503 (616) 776-6323 158311-00009 (05-09)(06-06)
(05-09)(06-06)

ATTENTION HOMEOWNER:
If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on JUNE 13, 2024.
The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Sawyer Stephan Brown, an unmarried man, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for VanDyk Mortgage Corporation, its successors and assigns, Mortgagee, dated October 8, 2021 and recorded October 21, 2021 in Liber 1727, Page 827 Van Buren County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Twenty-Seven Thousand Two Hundred Twenty-Six and 51/100 Dollars ($127,226.51).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public vendue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on JUNE 13, 2024.
Said premises are located in the Village of Bloomingdale, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Commencing at the Northeast corner of Lot(s) 102 of MAP OF THE VILLAGE OF BLOOMINGDALE according to the plat thereof recorded in Liber 25 of Deeds, Page 10 of Van Buren County Records; thence South 53 feet; thence West 66 feet; thence North 53 feet; thence East 66 feet to the place of beginning.
210 N Van Buren Street, Bloomingdale, Michigan 49026
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: May 16, 2024
File No. 24-004443
Firm Name: Orlans PC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400
(05-16)(06-06)

ATTENTION HOMEOWNER:
If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on JUNE 27, 2024.
The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Collin Kliphuis, unmarried man, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Van Dyk Mortgage Corporation, its successors and assigns, Mortgagee, dated May 3, 2022 and recorded May 12, 2022 in Liber 1737, Page 974 and Affidavit Affecting Realty recorded on May 2, 2024, in Liber 1765, Page 487, and Affidavit Affecting Realty recorded on May 2, 2024, in Liber 1765, Page 488, Van Buren County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Twenty-Six Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy-Five and 22/100 Dollars ($126,775.22).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public vendue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on JUNE 27, 2024.
Said premises are located in the Village of Bloomingdale, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Commencing at the Northeast corner of Lot 72 of the Village of Bloomingdale, in the Village of Bloomingdale, Van Buren County, Michigan, according to the recorded plat thereof; thence East 48 feet; thence South 7 rods; thence West 48 feet; thence North 7 rods to Beginning.
304 E Spring Street, Bloomingdale, Michigan 49026
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: May 30, 2024
File No. 24-003704
Firm Name: Orlans PC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400
(05-30)(06-20)

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on July 11, 2024. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Felicia A. French, an unmarried woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Center, LLC
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None
Date of Mortgage: July 3, 2017
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 6, 2017
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $110,377.93
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Decatur, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Beginning on the North and South 1/4 line of Section 1, Town 4 South, Range 14 West, at a point South 00 degrees 06 minutes 45 seconds East 1232.55 feet from the North 1/4 post of said Section 1; and running thence South 00 degrees 06 minutes 45 seconds along said 1/4 line, 261.36 feet; thence East, parallel with the North line of said Section 1, 500 feet; thence North 00 degrees 06 minutes 45 seconds West 261.36 feet; thence West 500 feet to the point of beginning.
Common street address (if any): 72999 County Road 665, Lawton, MI 49065-9421
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: June 6, 2024
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1532062
(06-06)(06-27)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON INCREASING PROPERTY TAXES

The Board of Trustees of the Paw Paw District Library will hold a public hearing on a proposed increase of 0.0816 mills in the operating tax millage rate to be levied on property in 2024.

The hearing will be held on **Monday, July 15, 2024 at 6:55 pm** at Paw Paw District Library, 609 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079.

If adopted, the proposed additional millage will increase operating revenues from ad valorem property taxes 5.08% over such revenues generated by levies permitted without holding a hearing. If the proposed additional millage rate is not approved, the operating revenue will increase by 0.58% over the preceding year's operating revenue.

The taxing unit publishing this notice, and identified below, has complete authority to establish the number of mills to be levied from within its authorized millage rate.

This notice is published by:
Paw Paw Library
609 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079
(269) 657-3800

LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE AMENDMENT OF THE 2023-2024 BUDGET AND THE PROPOSED 2024-2025 BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on June 24, 2024, at 6:00 o'clock p.m., at 650 W. St. Joseph St., Lawrence, Michigan, the Board of Education of Lawrence Public Schools will hold a public hearing to consider the District's proposed amendment of the 23/24 budget and the proposed 2024-2025 budget.

The Board may not adopt its amendment of the 23/24 budget and the proposed 2024-2025 budget until after a public hearing. A copy of the amendment of the 23/24 budget and proposed 2024-2025 budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate, is available for public inspection during normal business hours at 650 W. St. Joseph St., Lawrence, Michigan.

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.

Angela Marsh-Peek, Secretary
Lawrence Board of Education

LAWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE AMENDMENT OF THE 2023-2024 BUDGET AND THE PROPOSED 24/25 BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on June 17, 2024, at seven o'clock p.m., in Lawton, Michigan, the Board of Education of Lawton Community Schools will hold a public meeting to consider the District's proposed amendment of the 23/24 budget and the proposed 2024-2025 budget.

The Board may not adopt its amendment of the proposed amendment of the 23/24 budget and the proposed 2024-2025 budget until after a public hearing. A copy of the proposed amendment of the 23/24 budget proposed 2024-2025 budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate, is available for public inspection during normal business hours at 101 Primary Way, Lawton, Michigan.

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.

Larissa Hunt Secretary

EASY WAY TO FIND PANFISH AND A GOOD RECIPEE TO SHARE

Without a doubt I enjoy fishing with a rod in hand. However, after the spawning season ends there is a time to troll. Let me explain. On lakes that have a nice healthy weedbed such as cabbage weeds, trolling might not be needed.

I just returned from Lake Mitchell and we chased fish four straight days. Not once did we troll. Cabbage weeds grow to the edge of the drop-off and the fish relate to the outer edges for much of the year.

Most of my favorite lakes in Allegan County have minimal cabbage weeds. They have pond weed and junk weed. In this case the crappie and bluegill will not relate to the weeds.

Instead, the fish will slide back into the eight to fourteen foot depth of water. You might find scattered weeds or short grass but mostly it will be open water fairly near the edge of the drop-off and the shallow spawning flats.

Therefore the best method would be slow trolling. When we slow troll we run a combination of baits. I enjoy eating big bluegills and much as the platter sized crappie.

We troll homemade crawler harness rigs sized down just for the bluegill. We use size ten hooks spaced one to 1.5 inches apart. Just two hooks. We also use a size zero or a size one blade.

Another rod will have either the Stopper Lures Whip R Snap or the Charlie Brewer one inch grub. Another rod will have the Charlie Brewer crappie grub and or the Brewer Whirly Bee panfish spinner. Often we will run two baits/lures on one rod.

You might need to add a small sinker. Our goal is that the lures run at least a third of the way down. Normally adding one or two number seven split shots will take care of it.

Our trolling speed will hover between .4 mph and possible up to .6 mph. We mark a waypoint on each fish that we land. If the fish are tightly packed into a school we will cast. If not, we will troll and work over the locations that landed the most fish. Rod holders will help a lot.

When we troll we use the mapping or charting function on the graph. We will also highlight or color a set depth. Most often we highlight a depth between eight to fourteen feet.

Highlighting a particular depth and using the chart function you can troll in the exact depth that you wish. You will spot any changes of depth, turns and cups well in advance.

Here is a fish recipe that you might enjoy. A number of guys that I fish with have been tinkering with a crispy fish recipe that you can cook in the oven. I believe that we finally found it!

Take one third cup of instant potato flakes, the same amount of Italian Bread Crumbs and the same amount of Parmesan Cheese. I like rolling slightly moist fish in the potato flakes, then dipping them into an egg/milk wash and then into the mixed Italian Bread Crumbs/ Parmesan cheese. I will also sprinkle the fish with Old Bay seasoning. We press the fillets into the breading mixture so that the fish really get coated properly. Bake at 425 degrees for ten minutes on the panfish and maybe 14 minutes on the walleye. The fish is crunchy with a great taste.

Preheat the oven and the pan. If you want you can spray the pan with Olive Oil or something similar.

Fish tacos are a favorite of mine and you can use fresh fish, frozen fish or canned fish. You need a bag of Cole slaw, Verde Taco Seasonings, Guacamole, Tortilla shells and fish. Heat up the tortilla shells so they are crunchy. Mix taco sauce with Cole slaw. Blacken the fish. You can squeeze few drops of lime juice if you like.

Most often the fish will roam these edges until a thermocline gets established. Until then, slow trolling will fill the livewell and provide plenty of nice fish for a crispy oven baked fish dinner. Remember to visit the good folks at Bobs Gun and Tackle Shop.

tom maat with a gill caught on a small spinner

Jack Payne

Payne is a member of OWAA (outdoor writers association of America). He is an avid outdoorsperson who enjoys fishing, hunting, hiking and cooking. This column will hopefully enhance your outdoor experiences. "While I may have some knowledge, I am very fortunate that I do know many true experts that share their knowledge with me," said Payne. "Together, hopefully we all can learn and experience more fun in the great outdoors." Payne resides in southwest Michigan. His column will appear weekly in the Courier Leader/ Flashes.

"Born to Fly: Nancy Harkness Love" at HPL June 15th

Robert C. Myers, Director of History Programming for the Historical Society of Michigan, will present "Born to Fly: Nancy Harkness Love" at the Hartford Public Library, 12 Church St., Hartford, MI on Saturday, June 15th at 11 am. This event is free and open to the public and sponsored by the Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society.

Mr. Myer's oversees many of the Historical Society of Michigan's educational programs, including its Michiganders on the Road motorcoach tours, History Hounds lecture series, History Skills Workshops, and Michigan Heritage Home awards. He holds a BA in history from Alma College and an MA in history from Western Michigan University. He has authored numerous books and his articles have appeared in Michigan History Magazine, Chronicle, and Michigan Historical Review. He brings his life-long passion of history to the Hartford Public Library as he shares the life of Houghton-born Nancy Harkness Love, known for her restless spirit, who set out to form a woman's flying squadron at the outbreak of WWII. She left a legacy that encouraged aviators, both male and female, through her high-flying accomplishments and was tenured as director of the Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron.

This topic will have a vast appeal to those interested in military, aviation, and woman's studies as well as those who want to learn about Michiganders who made history.

WAVERLY TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN TIMELINE PROPOSED

Date	Action	Remarks
01.08.2024	P&Z Commission initialtes Master Plan Review Process	Zoning Administrator will submit letters to adjacent townships per MI Planning Enabling Act
02.11.2024	Student working session with P&Z/ Twp Bd Reps	Dates & Times TBD
04.15.2024	Student presentation to Twp P&Z & Bd members	• TBD. Final student project will be considered a draft document • Sent to the Township Board with recommendation to accept for distribution to adjacent townships
05.06.2024	P&Z Review/ Discussion Draft Master Plan	TBD
06.10.2024	P&Z Review/ Discussion Draft Master Plan	Recommendation to Twp Bd
07.11.2024	• Waverly Twp Bd receives the final draft of the revised Master Plan for review. • Waverly Twp Bd accepts revised master plan & moves to distribute same to adjacent townships for their review • Note: Twp Bd may, by resolution, opt to be the final approving body. If not, the P&Z is the final approving body	• Letter sent to adjacent townships with hard copy or online link for review or a simple statement that pdf can be emailed • Minimum 63-day review period commences • After 63 days, a public hearing will be set for the adoption of any amendments or revisions. Must be posted in the paper 15 days before the meeting (Twp Clerk).
10.07.2024	Public Hearing for the revised Master Plan if any additional amendments/ reviews are made/ approved at the public hearing, the revised master plan will be adopted and in effect.	• P&Z submits to the Waverly Twp Bd • Zoning Administrator letter to adjacent townships that the Master Plan is approved and a final copy available
10.15.2024	• Waverly Twp Clerk will post the revised Master Plan to the Waverly Tsp Website • Make copies of the final Master Plan for members of the Twp Bd & P&Z Commission	

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2024-2025 BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on June 20, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Paw Paw Public Schools Administration Building, 119 Johnson Road, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079, the Board of Education of Paw Paw Public Schools will hold a public hearing to consider the District's proposed 2024-2025 budget.

The Board may not adopt its proposed budget until after the public hearing. A copy of the proposed budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate, will be available for public inspection during normal business hours after June 13, 2024, in the Administration Building at 119 Johnson Road, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079.

The 2024 property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.
Paw Paw Public Schools
119 Johnson Road
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-415-5200

CITY OF GOBLES NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Gobles City Commission will hold a public hearing on the proposed city budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 at the Gobles City Hall, 105 E. Main St., Gobles, MI on June 18, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. local time. The property tax millage rate to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing. A copy of the budget is available for public inspection at Gobles City Hall.

Services such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of the printed materials being considered at the meeting will be available to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon 5 days notice to the Gobles City Hall. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Gobles City Clerk at 105 E. Main St., Gobles, MI (269) 628-2246.

Paula Sipes,
Gobles City Clerk
269.628.2246

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VILLAGE OF LAWTON • COUNTY OF VAN BUREN • STATE OF MICHIGAN

ORDINANCE NO. 01 of 2024

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 93.01, "ANTI-BLIGHT (GRASS)," OF CHAPTER 93, "HEALTH AND SANITATION; NUISANCES" TITLE IX, "GENERAL REGULATIONS," TO THE LAWTON VILLAGE CODE.

The following Ordinance was offered by Councilmember Turner and supported by Councilmember G. Dudek.

THE VILLAGE OF LAWTON ORDAINS:

Section 1. Amendment of Section 93.01 to the Lawton Village Code. That Section 93.01, "Anti-Blight (Grass)" of Chapter 93, "Health and Sanitation; Nuisances," Title IX, "General Regulations," of the Lawton Village Code, is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

$93.01 ANTI-BLIGHT (GRASS).

A. Purpose. Consistent with the letter and spirit of Public Act 344 of 1945, being MCL §125.71 et seq, as amended, it is the purpose of this section to prevent, reduce or eliminate blight or potential blight in the village by the prevention or elimination of certain environmental causes of blight or blighting factors which exist or which may in the future exist in the Village.

B. Cause of blight or blighting factors. It is hereby determined that the following uses, structures and activities are causes of blight or blighting factors which, if allowed to exist, will tend to result in blighted and undesirable neighborhoods. On and after the effective date of this chapter, no person, firm or corporation of any kind shall maintain or permit to be maintained any of these causes of blight or blighting factors upon any property in the Village, which is owned, leased, rented or occupied by such person, firm or corporation.

1. In any area, the storage upon any property of one or more junk automobiles, except in a completely enclosed building. For the purposes of this section, the term "junk" automobile shall include any motor vehicle which is not licensed for use upon the highways of the state, cannot be lawfully driven on public streets pursuant to state statutes, or whether so licensed or not, include any motor vehicle which is inoperable. "Inoperable" means incapable of being operated or propelled under its own power by reason of dismantling, disrepair or other cause, for any reason. Recreational vehicles, travel trailers, "fifth wheels" and other similar vehicles that are normally used for travel purposes and that are licensed either annually or during the period of use, which are kept in repair and parked in the driveway, parallel to the side of a residence, or in the back yard, shall be exempt from this subsection. No such vehicle shall be allowed to remain on any property when used for living purposes.
2. In any area, the storage upon any property of building materials, except in a completely enclosed building, unless there is in force a valid building permit issued by the Village for construction upon the property and the materials are intended for use in connection with such construction. Building materials shall include, but not be limited to: wood, lumber, bricks, concrete or cinder blocks, plumbing materials, electrical wiring or equipment, heating ducts or equipment, shingles, mortar, concrete or cement, nails, screws, or any other material used in constructing any structure.
3. In any area, the storage or accumulation of junk, trash, rubbish, or refuse of any kind, except domestic refuse stored in such a manner as not to create a nuisance. The term "junk" shall include bottles, cans, garbage, rubbish, parts of machinery or motor vehicles, appliances stored in the open, remnants of wood, metal or any other materials and/or building materials, or other cast-off material of any kind, whether or not the same could be put to any reasonable use.
4. In any area, the existence of any structure, or part of structure, which because of fire, wind, or other natural disaster or physical deterioration is no longer habitable as a dwelling, nor legally occupiable, pursuant to the Village zoning, building or other Village regulations, nor useful for any other purpose for which it may have been intended.
5. In any area, the existence of any vacant dwelling, garage, or other out- buildings not kept securely locked, windows kept glazed, or neatly boarded up and otherwise protected to prevent entrance thereto by vandals.
6. In any area, the existence of any partially completed structure, unless such structure is in the course of construction, in compliance with a valid building permit issued by the Village and the construction is completed within a reasonable time.
7. In any area, the storage upon any property of one or more junk watercraft, except in a completely enclosed building. For the purposes of this section, the term "junk" watercraft shall include any boats, pontoon boats, watercraft or devices designed for water recreational purposes, which are not registered with the state, cannot be lawfully used on any waters of the state pursuant to state statutes, or whether so registered or not, any boats, pontoon boats, watercraft or devices designed for water recreational purposes, which are inoperable. "Inoperable" means incapable of being operated or propelled under its own power by reason of dismantling, disrepair or other cause.
8. In any area, the existence of semi-trailers being used for storage, unless they are kept in the ordinary course of business in a district zoned specifically for commercial business.
9. In any area, the existence of noxious weeds. Noxious weeds shall be defined as in MCL §247.62 et seq., as amended, and the Enforcement Officer is appointed as the Village Noxious Weed Commissioner, pursuant to the statute. Owners of property within the Village shall be required to destroy, control, or remove noxious weeds as defined above.
10. In any area, the existence of grass, weeds or brush that constitute a fire hazard or is in violation of this Section governing the cutting and destroying of grass, weeds or brush in the Village.
    a. Developed property: Property that has been developed in any zone must be maintained in such a way that growth does not exceed 8" in height.
    b. Undeveloped or vacant property: Property that has not been developed in any zone must be maintained as follows:
        1. The interior of the property may be left to grow.
        2. The perimeter of the property on all sides must be cut 6 feet back from the property lines and street side to 8 inches or less a distance of 6 feet.
    c. Agriculture zone property: Property that is zoned agricultural and is currently being farmed is exempt from the provisions of this section, except:
        1. The yard surrounding any residential portion of the property must be maintained in accordance with the provisions of this section, and;
        2. The property adjacent to any road in any portion of property used for agricultural purposes shall be cut back to 8 inches or less.
    d. Exceptions: The Planning Commission may by a majority vote allow a property owner in a non-residential zone to apply for a permit to maintain their property by seeding with Michigan hardy wildflowers or similar plantings.
    e. In addition to any penalty as provided herein, failure to maintain the property will result in the Village mowing the nonconforming property or contracting to have the property mowed and billing the property owner for the cost plus an administrative fee. If not paid before December first (1st) of the same year, these costs will be levied against the property owner's taxes.
11. In any area, the existence of large amounts of lumber and/or timber. An accumulation of this type of material is allowed as a designated wood pile under the following conditions: the woodpile area to be located within the back yard; the wood is to be stacked orderly, with no random piles; the woodpile is to be maintained in such a manner so as not to allow harborage for rodents, snakes or other vermin. Woodpiles must be maintained so as not to endanger the safety of others or tend to depreciate the value of the property of others.
12. In any area, the storage upon any property of one or more junk snowmobiles or motorcycles, except in a completely enclosed building. For the purposes of this section, the junk snowmobiles or motorcycles shall include any snowmobiles or motorcycles which are not registered with the state, cannot be lawfully driven where permitted, pursuant to state statues, or whether so registered or not, any snowmobiles or motorcycles which are inoperable for any reason. "Inoperable" means incapable of being operated or moved under its own power by reason of dismantling, disrepair or other cause.

C. Enforcement

1. The owner, if possible, and the occupant of any property upon which any of the causes of blight or blighting factors set forth above is found to exist, shall be notified in writing to remove or eliminate such causes of blight or blighting factors form such property within ten (10) days after service of the notice. Such notice may be served personally or by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by leaving the same with an adult person on the premises, or by affixing the same in a prominent place on the premises, in which latter case, a copy of the notice shall be sent to the owner or occupant at his or her last known address by regular mail with proof of mailing. Additional time may be granted by the Enforcement Officer where bona fide efforts to remove or eliminate such causes of blight or blighting factors are in progress.
2. Failure to comply with such notice within the time allowed by the owner and/or occupant shall constitute a violation of this section.
3. Failure of the Village to give such a notice as provided herein shall not constitute a defense to any action to enforce the payment or debt created under the provisions of this article.
4. Owners and occupants with a prior violation under this Ordinance found to have blight on their property are in immediate violation of this Ordinance and may be issued a citation without providing 10 days' notice.
5. A person found to have violated this ordinance by a court of competent jurisdiction shall be penalized as follows:
    a. 1st Offense: A civil fine of up to $100 plus any costs incurred by the Village, and an administrative fee.
    b. 2nd Offense: Where the Defendant has had one (1) prior violation, a civil fine of up to $250 plus any costs incurred by the Village, and an administrative fee.
    c. 3rd Offense: Where the Defendant has two (2) prior violations, a civil fine of up to $500 plus any costs incurred by the Village, and an administrative fee.
    d. 4th Offense: Where the Defendant has three (3) prior violations, a civil fine of up to $1,000 plus any costs incurred by the Village, and an administrative fee.

In addition to the above, said Court may issue and enforce any judgement, writ, or order necessary to enforce this ordinance, including but not limited to ordering abatement of the blight or issuing a standing blight removal order permitting the Village of Lawton to remove said blight and seek post order judgement compensation for the costs of removal, or grant any other relief permitted by MCL §600.8302.

Any fines or fees not paid prior to December of the same year, will be recorded as a lien on the real property containing the blight pursuant to MCL $600.8731(1).

The costs recoverable are not limited to the costs taxable in ordinary civil actions and may include all expenses, direct and indirect, to which the Village of Lawton has incurred pursuant to MCL §600.8731 (1)

6. The Village Council, Planning Commission, or the Village Attorney may institute injunction, mandamus, abatement, or any other appropriate action, or proceedings to prevent, enjoin, abate or remove any blight or blighting factors. The rights and remedies provided herein are cumulative and in addition to all other remedies provided by law.
7. In addition to enforcement by a law enforcement officer, the Village may designate one or more code enforcement officers to enforce this ordinance.
8. A "prior violation" as defined by this ordinance, includes a Judgement in favor of the Village for a violation of this Ordinance, and any alleged violation of this Ordinance that was dismissed pursuant to an agreement entered into between the Village of Lawton and the individual, form or corporation, maintaining or permitting to be maintained the blight.

(Ord. 159, passed 2-12-2002, Amended Effective 5-3-2016, Amended Effective 5-28-2024) and see Penalty §93.99

Section 2. Repeal. That all other ordinances and resolutions in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 3. Publication and Effective Date. That this Ordinance or a synopsis of the Ordinance shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Village within 15 days after passage, and shall be effective 20 days after its enactment or upon publication, whichever occurs first.

YEAS: Councilmember(s) Turner, G. Dudek, Peterson, Smith, E. Dudek, Tanis, Appleby

NAYS: Councilmember(s) None.

ABSTAIN: Council Member(s) None.

ABSENT: Council Member(s) None.

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED.
Ordinance Adoption Date: 05/28/2024 Ordinance Publication Date: 06/06/2024
Ordinance Effective Date: 6/06/2024

CERTIFICATION

I, Brittany Rathbun, the duly appointed Clerk of the Village of Lawton, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of an Ordinance adopted by the Lawton Village Council at a regular meeting held May 28, 2024, in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Act No. 267 of the Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, as amended, the minutes of the meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by said Act.

VILLAGE OF LAWTON
BY: Brittany Rathbun, Village Clerk

2023 WATER QUALITY REPORT FOR THE VILLAGE OF DECATUR

WATER QUALITY DATA

Water quality monitoring is a crucial aspect to protecting water resources. Under the Clean Water Act, state, tribal and federal agencies monitor lakes, streams, rivers, and other types of water bodies to determine water quality condition. The data generated from these monitoring activities help water resource managers know where pollution problems exist, where to focus pollution control energies and where progress has been made.

ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

Reporting year: 2023

This report covers the drinking water quality for the Village of Decatur for the 2023 calendar year. This information is a snapshot of the quality of water that we provided to you in 2023. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state standards.

Your water comes from three groundwater wells located within the Village Limits. Well #2 is 116' deep, Well #3 well is 192' deep, and Well #4 is 192' deep. All Wells draw from a Drift clay-covered aquifer system. Our water is pumped fresh from these wells and no treatment is utilized at this time. The State of Michigan has performed an assessment of our source water. Such assessment was completed on all of the sources of drinking water across the country that provide water to 25 people or more. Each system's Wells were given a rating based on how susceptible the source water is to contamination from identified sources. This will help communities understand the potential threats to their water supplies and prioritize needs for protecting the water from contamination. This does not mean that your water is or will become contaminated. The possible susceptibility rating ranges from low to very high; the rating for the Wells in the Village of Decatur is moderately high. A complete copy of this report is available at the Decatur Village Hall.

The Village of Decatur is making efforts to protect our sources by participating in a Wellhead Protection Program, completed in September 2015.

If you would like to know more about the report, please contact The Village of Decatur.

- **Contaminants and their presence in water:**

  Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the **EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800) 426-4791.**

- **Vulnerability of sub-populations:**

  Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised persons such as individuals with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, organ transplant recipients, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their healthcare providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the **EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800) 426-4791.**

- **Sources of drinking water:**

  The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. Our water comes from wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- **Microbial contaminants,** such as viruses and bacteria which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- **Inorganic contaminants,** such as salts and metals, can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- **Pesticides and herbicides,** which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture and residential uses.
- **Radioactive contaminants**, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.
- **Organic chemical contaminants,** including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations that limit the levels of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which provide the same protection for public health.

WATER QUALITY DATA

The table below lists all the drinking water contaminants that were detected during the 2023 calendar year. The presence of these contaminants in the water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this table is from testing done January 1- December 31, 2023. The state allows us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants are not expected to vary significantly from year to year. All of the data is representative of the water quality, but some fields are more than one year old.

Terms and abbreviations used below:

- **Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG):** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
- **Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):** The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- **N/A:** Not applicable.
- **ND:** Not detectable at testing limit.
- **Ppb:** Parts per billion or micrograms per liter.
- **Ppm:** Parts per million or milligrams per liter.
- **pCi/l:** picocuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity).
- **Action Level (AL):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.
- **Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL):** The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that the addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.
- **Treatment Technique (TT):** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

Regulated Contaminant	MCL	MCLG	Level Detection	Range	Year Sampled	Violation Yes/No	Typical Source of Contaminant
Arsenic (ppb)	10	0	3.1	N/A	8-2-18	NO	Erosion of natural deposits; Runoff from orchards; Runoff from glass and electronics production wastes
Nitrate (ppm)	10	10	<0.10	<0.020	8-15-23	NO	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	<0.16	<0.10 <0.16	8-15-23	NO	Erosion of narutal deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.
Sodium (ppm)	N/A	N/A	24	5.9-28	8-15-23	NO	Erosion of natural deposits
Regulated Contaminant	**MCL**	**MCLG**	**Level Detection**	**Range**	**Year Sampled**	**Violation Yes/No**	**Typical Source of Contaminant**
Total Coliform (total number of % of positive samples/ month)	TT	N/A	N/A	N/A	0- Oct. 2023	NO	Naturally present in the enviroment
Alpha emitters (pCi/L)	15	0	ND	N/A	8-18-16	NO	Erosion of natural deposits
Combined radium (pCi/L)	5	0	0.716	ND-3.47	8-31-22	NO	Erosion of natural deposits

*** 90 percent of the samples collected were at or below the level reported for our water.*
**** Unregulated contaminants are those for which EPA has not established drinking water standards. Monitoring helps EPA to determine where certain contaminants occur and whether it needs to regulate those contaminants.*

Information about lead: If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The Village of Decatur is responsible for providing high-quality drinking water but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead

Water Service Line Investigations: As per the amended Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act, 1976 PA 399, water supplies must create and maintain a Complete Distribution System Materials Inventory (CDSMI) and submit it to EGLE by January 1, 2025. Part of the CDSMI is the investigation of individual water service lines. To get a better understanding of the water service lines in a community, EGLE has developed a randomized testing method based on the number of total services. Each randomly selected home must be physically verified externally, at the curb stop, and internally, where the service enters the home. All community water supplies with lead or galvanized service lines previously connected to lead (GPCL) must replace those service lines at a rate averaging 5% per year and must be completed by 2040. Preliminary investigations occurred within the Village from Summer 2023 to Spring 2024 and are complete.

PER-AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS)							
Regulated Contaminant	**MCL, TT, or MRDL**	**MCLG or MRDLG**	**Level Detected**	**Range**	**Year Sampled**	**Violation Yes/No**	**Typical Source of Contaminant**
Hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-SA) (ppt)	370	N/A	<2.0	<1.8-<2.0	2023	No	Discharge and waste from industrial facilities utilizing the Gen X chemical process
Perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS) (ppt)	420	N/A	<2.0	<1.8-<2.0	2023	No	Discharge and waste from industrial facilities; stain-resistant treatments
Perfluorohexane sulfonic scid (PFHxS) (ppt)	51	N/A	<2.0	<1.8-<2.0	2023	No	Firefighting foam; discharge and waste from industrial facilities
Perfuorohexanoic acid (PFHxA) (ppt)	400,000	N/A	<2.0	<1.8-<2.0	2023	No	Firefighting foam; discharge and waste from industrial facilities
Perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA) (ppt)	6	N/A	<2.0	<1.8-<2.0	2023	No	Discharge and waste from industrial facilities; breakdown of precursor compounds
Perfluorooctane sulfanic acid (PFOS) (ppt)	16	N/A	<2.0	<1.8-<2.0	2023	No	Firefighting foam; discharge from electroplating facilities; discharge and waste from industrial facilities
Perfluoroocatane acid (PFOA) (ppt)	8	N/A	<2.0	<1.8-<2.0	2023	No	Discharge and waste from industrial
Inorganic Contaminant Subject to Action Levels (AL)	**Action Level**	**MCLG**	**Your Water[4]**	**Range of Results**	**Year Sampled**	**Number of Samples Above AL**	**Typical Source of Contaminant**
Lead (ppn)	15	0	0	N/A	9-2021	0	Lead service lines, corrosion of household plumbing including fittings and fixtures; Erosion of natural deposits
Copper (ppm)	1.3	1.3	0.23	0-0.021	8-8-18	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

MONITORING AND REPORTING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY (EGLE) Requirements: The state and EPA require us to test our water regularly to ensure its safety. We met all the monitoring and reporting requirements for 2023. We will update this report annually and will keep you informed of any problems that may occur throughout the year, as they happen. Copies are available at the Decatur Village Hall (114 N. Phelps St. Decatur MI). This report will not be sent to you unless requested. We invite public participation in decisions that affect drinking water quality. Village of Decatur Council Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month at 7:00 pm at Village Hall. For more information about your water, or the contents of this report, contact Jimmy Ebeling at 269-423-6114 or go to the Village of Decatur Website to view the current and prior Decatur CCRs (https://decaturmi.org/how_do_i/forms.php#outer-77). For more information about safe drinking water, visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at www.epa.gov/safewater/.